







Official Journal of the

MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM, INC.

P.O. Box 17240, Nokomis Station
Minneapolis, MN 55417-0240

EDITORIAL STAFF

Aaron IsaacsEditor
3816 Vincent Ave. So.
Minneapolis, MN 55410
Sandra Kay Bergman.....Production Editor
Alan Jensen.....Circulation

CIRCULATION

The *Minnegazette* is published quarterly by the Minnesota Transportation Museum, Inc., and is mailed to members in good standing without charge under Third Class postal permit. Members may request First Class Mailing for an additional \$5 per year charge.

SUBMISSIONS

The *Minnegazette* welcomes submissions for publication of articles, photos and other illustrative materials of historical interest relating to transportation in the Upper Midwest. No payment is made, and publication is at the editor's discretion.

MUSEUM PURPOSE

The Museum is a non-profit educational corporation organized in Minnesota in 1962 to preserve and communicate to the public the experience of Minnesota's surface public transportation history. It operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and the Minnehaha Depot in Minneapolis, the Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul, the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Ry. in Osceola and the Steamboat Minnehaha in Excelsior.

MEMBERSHIPS

Individual	\$ 25	Family	\$ 30
Sustaining	\$ 50	Sponsor	\$ 100

Send dues to:

4707 Lyndale Ave. N., Mpls., MN 55430

ADDRESS CHANGES

AND

MEMBERSHIP CONCERNS

Send to:

David Kettering - Membership Secretary
171 Valleyside Dr., St. Paul, MN 55119

Public Information
(612) 228-0263

Member Information Line
(612) 228-9412

Web site

<http://www.augsburg.edu/mtm/mtm.html>

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Elected Trustees

Chair	Michael E. Miller
Vice-Chair	Morten Jorgensen
Secretary	Richard Fish
Treasurer	Russell Olson
	Leo Meloche

Appointed voting Trustees

Art Pew	Robert Torkelson
---------	------------------

Honorary non-voting Trustees

Dennis Dorgan	Aaron Isaacs
Byron Olsen	John Walker

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

-To the many donors to the Traction Fund's Annual Appeal (see list on page 6).

-To the **City of Lake Elmo**, for donating 2500 gallons of water during #328's trip to Stillwater.

-To **Christie Bailey** and her family, for donating a Twin City Motor Bus Co. 1935 Yellow Coach (see page 8).

-To **Bill Olsen** for donating the towing of the Bailly Yellow coach.

-To **Louis W. Hill** for his donation to the Endowment Fund.

CORRECTIONS & NEW INFO

Regarding last issue's photo of the Mayor's Handcar Race, **Glenn O'Connell** writes, "...it sparked a memory of a passage I read in Frank Donovan's book *Mileposts on the Prairie*. The year was 1938, and the M&St.L. was on the brink of dismemberment at the hand of a newly chartered corporation called Associated Railways Company. Ostensibly, the M&St.L. was hopelessly insolvent, and the plan called for Associated Railways to acquire the M&St.L., abandon superfluous trackage, and split up the rest among the region's seven other major roads. In the end, the ICC quashed Associated's plan, and the railroad would be allowed to reorganize itself under the leadership of **Lucian C. Sprague**. To celebrate, the employees and friends of the railroad put together a three-day celebration on July 21-23, 1938. The opening feature was the Mayor's Cup Sweepstakes Handcar Derby to be run along Third Street from Third Avenue South to Nicollet. The participants would be mayors from towns along the Louie's route. Mayor **George Leach** of Minneapolis fired the starter's gun, and the two handcars with five mayors on each were on their way. In the end, the car captained by Mayor **Albert D. Flor** of New Ulm beat by inches the team captained by Mayor **Edgar L. Hayek** of Albert Lea."

Joel Hutchinson recalled a similar event on September 30, 1948, St. Paul Association Railroad Day. It was held at noon, using the streetcar tracks on 4th Street. Hutchinson remembers seeing the handcars pass the Great Northern's office building at 4th and Jackson, just across from the Union Depot.

The unidentified motorman on page 21 is **Phil Hanson**.

Steve Harrod writes that the steam towboat S.S. Thorpe pictured on the inside front cover of last issue operated until 1960 and survives today on display in Keokuk, IA.

OBITUARIES

Tom Lamphier died on September 9 at age 72. A career railroader, he was Division Manager of the Great Northern at Superior, WI, was promoted to Vice President of Lines West, and capped his career as President of Burlington Northern. He was instrumental in the building of the Lake Superior Museum of Transportation and served on its Board. Tom arranged the donation of the William Crooks, the NP 0-4-0 Minnetonka, and the Milwaukee Road boxcab electric. He served on the boards of Amtrak and the Minnesota Historical Society. He was a generous friend to MTM, responsible for the donation of the baggage car #480, the Twin Ports, the NP caboose, the NP's Stillwater branch and the lease of Como Shops.

MTM members are mourning the untimely death of **Todd Rust**, who died of cancer on November 15 at age 43. Todd joined MTM in the late 1980's as a Railroad Division volunteer. He became the Railroad General Superintendent in 1994. Respected for his organizational skills and winning personality, he guided the Division through the recent reorganization of the Osceola & St. Croix Valley. Despite being gravely ill in the months preceding his death, Todd continued to be active around the railroad. Two weeks before his death, he was the engineer for the end of season equipment move from Osceola to Jackson Street (see page 13).

MTM has established a fund for the Rust family, and members may send donations to:

Rust Family Trust,
4707 Lyndale Avenue N.,
Minneapolis, MN 55430.

Front cover: It's February 1937, and you're looking SE across the Washington Ave. viaduct just south of the Milwaukee Depot in Minneapolis.

Inside front cover: As nostalgically as we remember streetcars, winter was no fun. Witness this scene of wind blown passengers squeezing on and off in the middle of rush hour traffic. The date is December 26, 1938. Both Star Tribune photos, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

-Michael E. Miller

"Too few people are doing all the work..." That's the theme I hear everywhere in the Museum. "We don't have enough (fill in the blank) engineers, operators, pursers, coach attendants, mechanics, restorers, managers, oral history interviewers, potential Board members, etc., etc." I hear fears for the continuation of the Museum's activities as older, highly dedicated members depart. And there are legitimate questions as to whether the "younger generation" who didn't live through the era of the great trains and streetcars will have some interest in continuing what was begun over 30 years ago.

Item: The entire Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway season was done with 61 volunteers, and that includes some people who signed in only once. There is a real question whether we can do another season without more people.

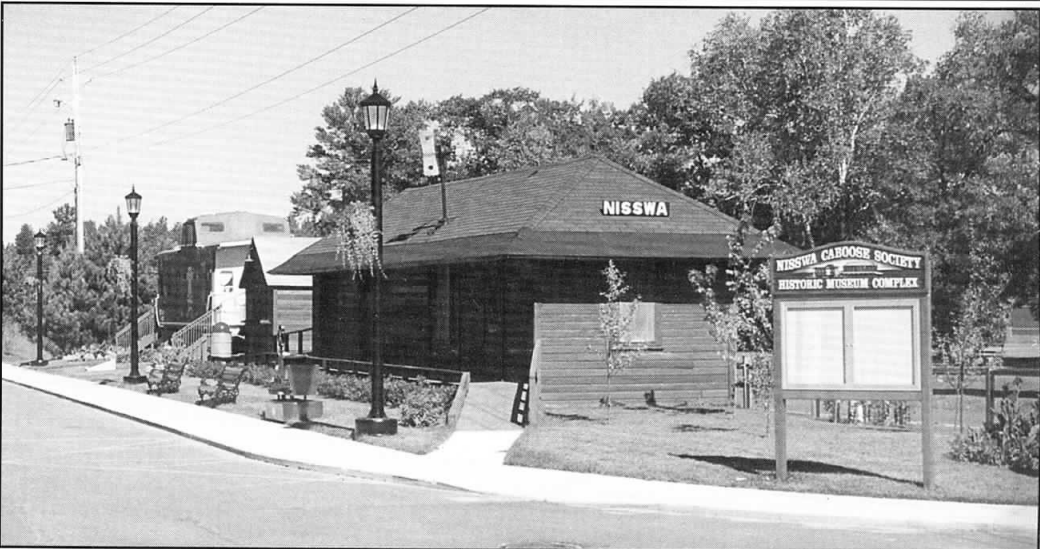
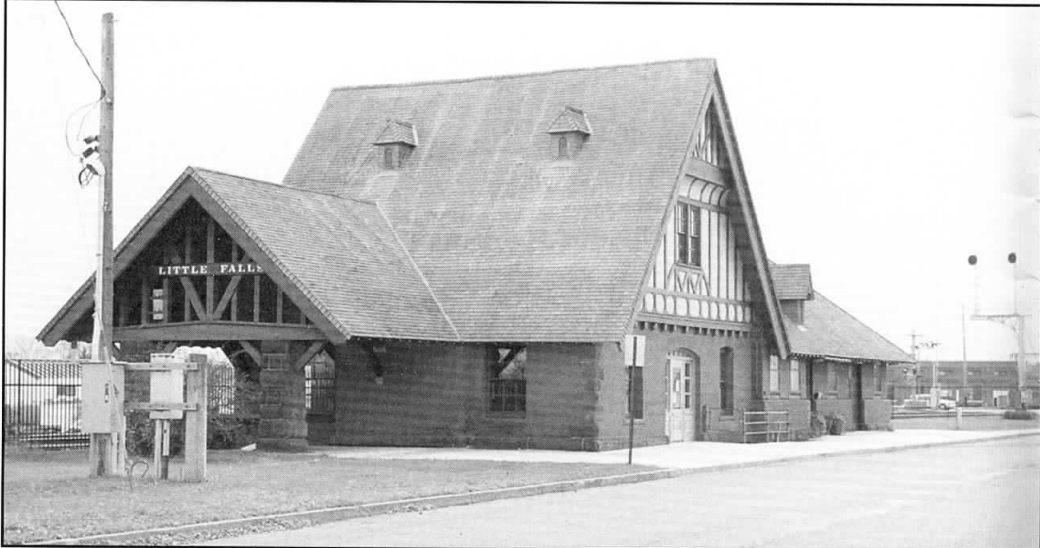
So, what do we do about it?

We certainly talk a lot about it- in the shops, during operations, over coffee and everywhere two or more members gather. But when something needs to be done, we invariably turn to one of our already overworked people and ask him/her to take on just one more task. The history of the Museum is strewn with people who gave 200% for a period of time and then "flamed out" and were never heard from again.

Perhaps we should start by declaring 1997 to be "The Year of the Volunteer" for MTM.

The fact is that there are organizations around here like the Minnesota Historical Society, the Institute of Arts and the Science Museum of Minnesota that have active volunteer rosters pushing 1000 at any given time. They also have professional staff who do nothing but recruit, train, place and supervise volunteers.

I am convinced that, for starters, we have many people already in the Museum who would be available for certain tasks if they were just asked, but so far we haven't done a good job of asking. We do have multiple levels of "crew calling" in all the divisions and those folks do an excellent job. But we tend to draw from the same relatively small list of the people we know we can count on. What about all the other members that we've never gotten around to calling, who consider themselves "too busy" to volunteer, yet might respond to a personal call to do a specific job, for a specific period of time?



Al Jensen took a trip north and visited these restored depots along the Northern Pacific's Little Falls-Bemidji line. (top) Lake Hubert was featured in the Spring 1996 Minnegazette. (center) Little Falls. (bottom) Nisswa.

My own personal case proves the point. It never occurred to me that I might chair the Museum after only a few years of involvement. My wife knew I had always wanted to operate streetcars, since we live only a few blocks from the Como-Harriet. So, one winter, with her encouragement, I applied for operator training on the

annual Traction Survey. Then came some work at the car barn and coach attendant on the Railroad. Then **Louis Hoffman** asked if I would be interested in filling out a spot on the Board. Then I was encouraged to chair the Board... The point is that someone was asking and encouraging. I previously held the notion that only those involved in the

Museum for 20-plus years, or scholars of TCRT and railroad history would be considered eligible for leadership positions. Not so. All that "stuff" can (and should) be learned, but it shouldn't deter someone from getting involved now.

A couple of weeks ago, the Railroad Division Annual Meeting was held at Jackson Street. Some of us had met for a couple of hours ahead of time to try to identify people to fill key positions- and we kept coming up short. However, by the end of the afternoon, some unexpected but highly qualified people stepped forward. But we can't count on that. We need to ask, and we need to have systems and people in place to do the asking and process the answers.

Beyond the Museum itself, there are the railroad historical societies, model railroad clubs, retiree organizations, employee groups, etc. that could be great sources of volunteers. But we need to ask.

Fortunately, a lot of good preparatory work has already been done. **Aaron Isaacs** has done considerable research on the topic and has written a series of articles for *Railway Museum Quarterly*. Copies are available. There are other members who have experience and talents in this area we can tap.

At the Board level, we have made a commitment to conduct sessions on volunteer management and recruitment early in the year.

The alternative is to stagnate or run the risk that, should a few key people drop out of a given division, we might lose "critical mass" to the point where the operation itself might become part of the region's history of surface transportation.

On a sad note, the Museum suffered a profound loss with the death of **Todd Rust** in November. In addition to his superb leadership of the Railroad Division, Todd was one of the finest human beings I have known. In his 43 years, Todd gave to all his communities (his family, radio broadcasting, the City of Princeton, volunteer fire fighting, the MTM) more than most people give in a lifetime. Beyond that, I know that his life and personality will have an influence on those who knew him for many years to come. Todd had the ability to bring people together and make things happen without controversy. There was an easy grace to everything he did. He had a deep love for his family, his friends and the Museum-and it was returned in kind. He will be greatly missed.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

October 1996

- Reviewed insurance for 1997.
- Suspended one member indefinitely and another temporarily for misconduct.
- Approved the Traction Division reorganization plan.

November 1996

- The Board did not meet.

December 1996

- Elected officers for 1997 and appointed non-elected trustees.

TRACTION DIVISION REPORT

-Louis Hoffman

Traction Division reorganization

Starting January 1, 1997, the Traction Division became team-managed. The Division's organizational structure remains basically the same as has been previously published in these pages. The difference is that there is no longer a General Superintendent. The General Superintendent's administrative duties have been merged into the Passenger Services Department, creating a new General Services Department. I have agreed to serve as the first General Agent, while **Michael Sciortino** will continue to serve as Passenger Agent.

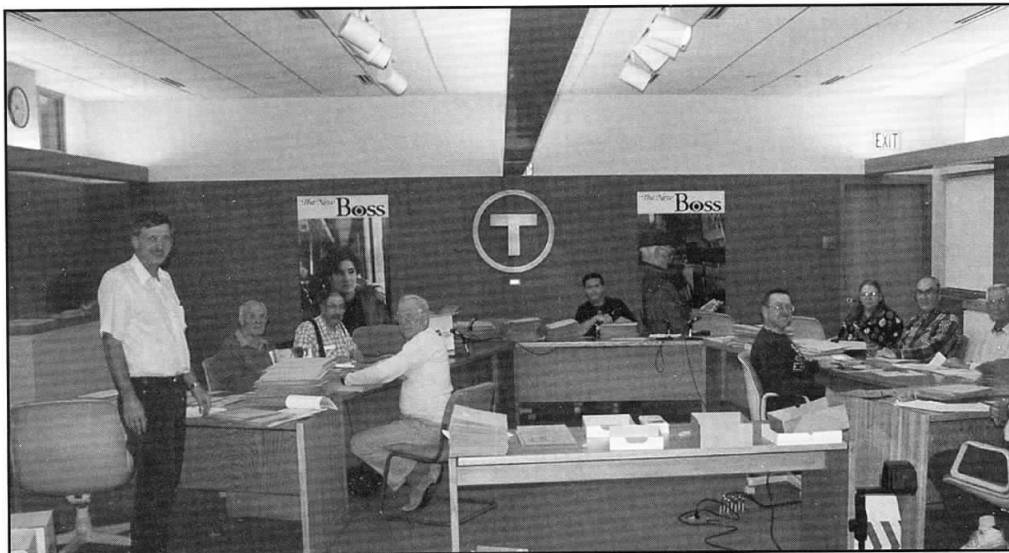
Intra-department decisions will be made by the department heads so long as they're consistent with both the Division's long-range plan, the annual operating plan, and the annual budget. Division-wide decisions will be made

by the Traction Committee. The Traction Committee consists of the six department heads - Roadmaster **Scott Heiderich**, myself as General Agent and Committee Chair, Chief Mechanical Officer **Mike Miller**, Superintendent of Motor Bus Operations **Fred Beamish**, Superintendent of Safety and Training **Karl Jones**, and Superintendent of Transportation **Al Jensen**. This group will meet as part of the three Division superintendent's meetings held every year. As a result, management decisions will be made much as they have always been, by the volunteers who have been active in Division management. The only major difference is that department heads will take on greater responsibility.

We expect that major decisions affecting the operating season will be made as part of the budget planning and operating plan development process. We expect to approve the basics of an annual operating plan at our January meeting, to finalize it and have a Division budget approved at our April meeting (to be submitted to the Board of Trustees in April or May, well before the start of the Museum's fiscal year on June 1), and to discuss necessary course corrections and long-range planning issues at our fall meeting.

Annual Appeal To date

To date, donations to the Traction Division in this fiscal year total \$5,257, including donations to the 1996 Annual Appeal totaling \$3,780. The Annual Appeal donations come from 51 persons and one business, representing 41 memberships. Nearly half of the total has come from four persons and one



Four times a year, year in and year out, the *Minnegazette* stuffing and mailing crew quietly gets the job done. They meet at the MCTO Heywood office building, in the same room as the MTM Board of Trustees. L to R are Foreman **Al Jensen**, **Rod McDonald** (visiting traction fan from Australia), **George Isaacs**, **John Haller**, **Tony Vaitkunas**, **Jim Vaitkunas**, **Jeanne Inselman**, **Roy Harvey**, **Russ Olson** and **Karl Jones**. **Aaron Isaacs** photo.

business, representing but two memberships. This means we have nearly \$2,300 to go to equal the results of last year's Appeal. However, we have yet to hear from about 800 members. In addition, we've also received several hundred dollars anonymously via the donation box in the Linden Hills Depot.

In addition to the persons listed in the last Minnegazette, additional Annual Appeal donations have been received from **Earl and Bettye Anderson, James H. Anderson and Mary H. Quirk, Anthony J. Bauman, Barbara Benner, Bruce J. Brunette, Con-Tek Machine, Inc., Richard and Carol Fish, Jack Fitchette, Roy and Pat Harvey, Dewey Hassig, John Heinl, Louis Hoffman and Becky Hamblin, Ken Holley, Doug Hultgren, Aaron Isaacs, George and Florence Isaacs, George J. Ittner, Robert R. Johnson, Gerald Kackman, Richard Kasseeth, Corbin Kidder, Elwin Miller, Dennis and Ruth Stephens, Walt Strobel, Barb Thoman, James A. Vaitkunas, Lyle E. Vogt, and Sven A. Wehrwein.**

If you haven't yet made your contribution, it's not too late. We have a long way to go to equal, let alone exceed, the results of last year's Annual Appeal. And we've received contributions from only about two percent of the total membership. Even last year, the Appeal received donations from only ten percent of the membership. Compare this with donations to a sister museum,

the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, Maine, with more than 1,200 members. In 1995, 735 members and friends of Seashore donated \$420,000 to that museum. Their year-end Annual Fund brought in more than \$17,000 from 260 people - without the hook of premiums.

We have also heard from several members about undelivered premiums. It appears that several items have either been lost in the mails or have never been sent because the paperwork has been lost or misplaced. If you are the victim of this, all it takes to resolve it is one phone call: please call me at 729-0287 and tell me what premium you requested. We'll mail it out right away. To prevent this from happening in the future, we will log in all donations and premium requests as soon as they are received, log all shipments (which we currently do), and compare them regularly to make sure no one has been missed. This way, lost paperwork on our end won't be a problem.

Behind the scenes

Have you ever wondered what happens to all of the money collected at Lake Harriet? Or how the crew gets all that cash and change? It happens thanks to the work of our volunteer cashiers, Chief Cashier **John Prestholdt** (who sets the schedule and establishes procedures) and Cashiers **Mike Buck, Gary Gustafson, Russ Olson, and Ed Rapoport**, and the fine cooperation of **Jeanne Setnes**, our accountant, and her staff. Thanks for all of your work.

We get by with a little help from our friends Department

We recently came across the Community Services Directory for the Minneapolis Lakes area. This handy guide is distributed by Burnet Realty. It features a two-page spread on the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line arranged by our own **Michael Sciortino**. Included is a shot of #1300 and #265 proceeding through the Glen in winter, an interior scene, and an overview of the Fairgrounds yard. In addition, it includes our schedule and map and text from our brochure. Thanks to **Bob Kessler** for this very nice publicity.

Walking tours

In September, **Bob Glancy** and **Mike Miller** did two walking tours of the Como-Harriet Line with students from the Open-U program. They started at 31st and Irving, where the line turned off 31st and headed down the alley

towards the bridge over 36th Street and the present north end of track. Points of interest included remnants of the 19th century Motor Line, the old TCRT station platform and steps at 35th Street, and the former sites of various old mansions and hotels.

At the Lake Calhoun stop they were met by a streetcar and the tour continued south with stops and explanations of the "ghosts" and history along the line. The groups were very enthusiastic about the experience, and more tours are anticipated next summer.

Engineering Department

Before the contractors could begin work on the car barn extension, much volunteer work needed to be done. A total of 24 discrete tasks or sets of tasks were identified by Project Manager **George Isaacs**. These involved the removal of anything that would get in the way of the extension of the car barn.

A special thank you goes to those who did this preparatory work: **George Isaacs** for his meticulous planning, **Scott Heiderich** and **Al Jensen** for organizing the work crews, and **Keith Anderson, Tim Anderson, Tom Beaumont, Lyndon Benson, David Boone, Bernie Braun, Harold Dalland, Mark Digre, Karen Digre, Maryellen Digre-Mueller, John Dillery, Blair Dollery, Ben Exley, Rodger Gardner, Joel Gensler, Bill Graham, Gary Gustafson, Nils Halker, Roy Harvey, Scott Heiderich, George Isaacs, Mark Jarboe, David Jasper, Karl Jones, John Keller, John Kennedy, Corbin Kidder, Marvin Krafve, Tim Layeux, Larry Ludford, Jerry Martin, Charles McCarthy, Mike E. Miller, Steve Mitchell, Gary Neunsinger, Jim Otto, John Prestholdt, Michael Sciortino, Phil Settergren, Clyde Stephens, Walt Strobel, and Peter Sussman** for doing all of the work. A special thanks goes to **Ben Exley, Roy Harvey, and Karl Jones**, who were present on most Saturdays and could be counted on to do those little jobs which always pop up. All in all, these volunteers staffed Saturday morning work crews in September, October and November, ranging in size from three to ten persons. Overhead work was coordinated by **Jim Vaitkunas** with the assistance of **Bill Cordes, Mike J. Miller, and Tony Vaitkunas.**

This kind of extraordinary effort hasn't been seen at Lake Harriet for many years. Even though in response to a special project that won't be repeated, this kind of effort - by this many volunteers - is needed every spring and every fall to catch up with deferred



MCTO bus driver Cheryl Kienetz-Hall has joined the ranks of MTM volunteer drivers. On this day she was running the October streetcar substitute service during car barn construction. Louis Hoffman photo.

track and physical plant maintenance. So thanks to all of you who participated and please keep it up.

In addition, once again, a very special extra thank you goes to **Roy Harvey**. Regular Minnegazette readers know that Roy is always the number one volunteer on the Engineering and Mechanical Department volunteer log, racking up more than 400 hours per year since we began keeping these statistics. If anyone is indispensable to the maintenance of our physical plant, it's Roy. He has been on-site more or less constantly since construction began, working with our contractors to keep it going smoothly. And now that winter is here, it's Roy who keeps the walks around the car barn clear to make access as easy as possible. As always, thanks, Roy for all you do.

As an early winter descended upon the Twin Cities, the car barn expansion was well underway. The concrete footings and foundations were poured, the steel frame was erected, and the doors, walls and roof were attached. Work was set to begin on the extension of the concrete pit in the Maintenance Barn. After the gas line was reconnected, car barn heat was restored, allowing work to begin on fleet maintenance. Finishing touches on the car barn expansion, the restoration of the former southbound carstop, steps, and tunnel-with electric lighting added in the tunnel- and the installation of the 415 ties, are all slated for the spring. Volunteers will be replacing switch ties in the north siding switch, along with a myriad of other jobs.

Thanks to **George Isaacs**, **Mike Miller**, and **Scott Heiderich** for all of their hard work on the planning and administration of this very important project. A special thank you goes to George who did the lion's share of the paperwork and was our primary liaison with MnDOT. It was his meticulous work that resulted in the low bid coming in about \$5,400 under the amount of money available for the project, allowing more than 100 additional ties to be installed.

We also want to thank our contractors, Metro Building Systems, Inc., Hage Concrete, and Railroad Specialties, for their fine cooperation and work for us, and the staff at MnDOT and the City of Minneapolis, especially **Mike Monahan** and **John Hotvet**, for all of their cooperation and work on our behalf. A special thanks also goes to Council Member **Steve Minn** and his assistant, **Karen Collier**, for their work to secure a special

council permit to begin work while our request for a conditional use permit was pending, to **Ed Virnig** in the Zoning Office work his prompt and efficient handling of our CUP and building permit applications.

Finally, Overhead Lines Foreman **Jim Vaitkunas** will be on leave of absence from his position for 18 months beginning the first of the year. It seems that the Army has transferred Jim to Salt Lake City without consulting with us. He does expect to return and Roadmaster **Scott Heiderich** will fill in for him for the duration absent a volunteer. If you're interested in this position, please contact Scott. Jim has indicated that he will continue to organize the Traction Division survey report and help in other ways, so long as it can be done long distance.

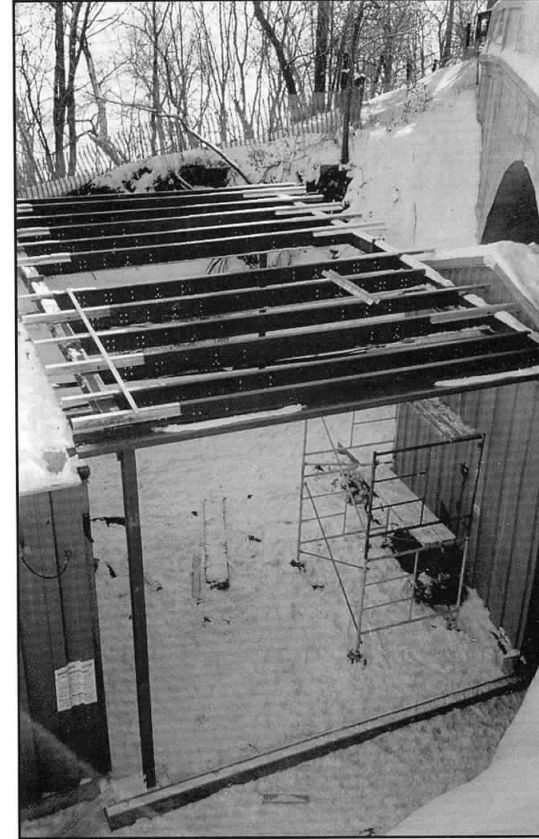
Mechanical Department

Activities at the Linden Hills Car barn and Shops were reduced to basic maintenance and repair for the duration of the car barn construction project. This decision was made both because of the inconvenience of working on the cars with building construction going on, because there was no heat for some time, and because every body was needed for the various construction projects. By now, all should be back to normal. So feel free to stop the barn by any Wednesday evening or Saturday morning.

As of December 9th, the foundation was down and the steel was mostly up on the Linden Hills car barn extensions.
Aaron Isaacs photos.

Motor Bus Department

The Motor Bus Department was the highlight of the Traction Division's fall with regular operations every Sunday in October. These operations were to be in lieu of streetcar service. Because of changes in the construction schedule, streetcar service was able to continue past the scheduled September 29 cutoff date. Even though the crew calling operation had shut down for the season, streetcars ran three of the four



Sundays in October. Nevertheless, #1399 provided half-hourly service from the Linden Hills Depot to Hennepin and Lake, with every other trip serving 43rd and Upton.

Former MTC AM General #1488 was scheduled to be moved to the City of Minneapolis' Impound Lot just west of downtown as this report was finalized. The delay from the planned October move was caused by early snow clogging the lot with towed cars. The one GM 5105 (of the three donated by Lorenz Bus Co.) to be retained will be moved, probably to the Hennepin County Public Works Yard in Hopkins in the spring. The other two 5105s will be scrapped for parts to keep #1399, the 5105 moved to Hopkins, and 5303 #189 (5303s and 5105s are similar mechanically) running.

Our thanks to the City of Minneapolis, Council Member **Lisa McDonald**, and Assistant Public Works Director **Mike Monahan** for making space available at the Impound Lot and to Hennepin County, Commissioner **Peter McLaughlin**, County Engineer **Vern Genzlinger**, and yard manager **Barb Sutey** for making additional space available at the Hopkins Public Works Yard (where our donated ties are stored). Of course, a special thanks to our own Jackson Street Roundhouse, **Art Pew**, **George Bergh**, and **Wanda Sims** for making temporary space available over the years.

In the early 1980's, **Aaron Isaacs** spotted a 1930's vintage Yellow transit bus that was owned by a construction worker, who lived in it when he was working away from home. Wrongly thinking it was the same model that ran in the Twin Cities, Aaron persuaded his employer, the Metropolitan Transit Commission, to buy it. It spent the next ten years stored at various MTC garages, but was never restored. Eventually MTC asked that it be removed and it spent several years sitting outside at Jackson Street, where it was vandalized in 1995. It turned out to be a Model 733, built sometime from 1937 to 1940. The Faribault Bus Company had owned that model, but we never did identify ours.

During the 1995 ARM Convention, the bus was shopped around to the visiting delegates, and Tucson's Old Pueblo Trolley agreed to buy it. They already owned one, which they plan to restore, and needed another as a parts supply.

The planning was underway for them to send a flatbed truck from Tucson when MTM was, quite out of the blue, offered a real TCRT Yellow coach as a replacement. Aaron was approached by **Christie Bailly**, an MCTO District



It's rough, but intact. This is the museum's latest acquisition, a Yellow Model 715 from the early 1930's that may have been owned by Twin City Motor Bus Co. We don't know its number yet. Bill Olsen photos.



Supervisor, whose father had driven for Twin City Lines. In 1955 he purchased a recently retired Model 715. The bus was converted to a camper and had been sitting unused in the woods for many years. The family wanted to get rid of it, and would MTM be interested?

The model 715 was built from 1934 to 1937 and preceded the 733. It sits on the same frame, but has a less rounded look. **Russ Olson's** records show that Twin City Motor Bus Company owned 15 of the slightly longer Model 716. They were the first flat front (no protruding engine hood) buses owned by the company.

Because of the auspicious timing, MTM was able to hire Old Pueblo's truck to make a side trip to Aitkin to pick up the 715 and bring it to Jackson Street. There it was swapped for the 733. Aaron estimates this saved MTM about \$200 compared to renting a local rig.

Bill Olsen volunteered to accompany the truckers to Aitkin, and it's a good thing he did. The 715 was buried so deep in the mud that Bill had to hire a tow truck to pull it out. He donated this

expense to the Museum. The towing delay caused the truck to arrive at Jackson Street after the automatic gate had closed at 7PM. Once again, Bill saved the day by using his cellular phone to call for help. Aaron borrowed **Dave Redding's** gate key and the move concluded successfully, if a few hours late.

The 715 is intact, but in pretty rough shape, as the photos show. It still has two of its original passenger seats, which will help guide the restoration. If any member is interested in adopting the bus as a project, please call Aaron at 929-7066.

The Motor Bus Department is in the process of developing a long-range plan for the maintenance of the current operating fleet and the restoration of the rest of the fleet - GMC 5303 #198, Mack #630, AM General #1488, the one remaining GMC 5105, and the Yellow. We'll provide more information in future Minnegazettes as the plan is fleshed out. Current Traction Division volunteers don't have the expertise or time to maintain, restore, or operate a

fleet of buses. Running a streetcar line for six months is quite enough, thank you. So we'll be recruiting others - MCTO employees and retirees and others with interest in buses. If you have automotive or metalworking skills, a commercial drivers license, an interest in buses, or if you want to help recruit volunteers or raise funds, please call Department Superintendent **Fred Beamish** at 782-1953 to volunteer.

What to do with a six bus fleet? Good question. The long-range plan will address that too. There's the usual Traction Division and museum-related events you've read about in the Minnegazette in the past. Then there's using our buses as goodwill ambassadors to community events, festivals, and parades throughout the Twin Cities and even beyond. Boats, trains, and trolleys can only go where there's water or track - our buses can go where no boat, train, or trolley can. Interested in coordinating this activity? Call me at 729-0287.

Passenger Services Department

The long-awaited history of the Como-Harriet line will soon be available. *Twin City Lines - The 1940's* described the Twin Cities' streetcar system in the 1940's, its last full decade. The new publication documents the Como-Harriet line from 1880 to today. It includes detailed information from the memorable May-June 1984 Minnegazette written by **Fred Rhodes**. The new booklet, written by **Aaron Isaacs**, also includes much new information, including a history of MTM's restoration of a small portion of the line. Look for the order form included with a future Minnegazette.

You'll note that this new publication is quite inexpensive. The low cost was made possible by selling advertisements. We thank all of the merchants whose support for this project made it possible. Please return the favor by patronizing them. We also thank **Michael Sciortino** for selling the advertising.

Transportation Department

Ridership in May and the first half of June was depressed by cool, wet weather. Despite this, May ridership was about ten percent higher than last May. A beautiful second half of June pushed that month's ridership up about twenty percent over last year. Streetcar ridership for the year totaled 39,787. This was above last year's total, but still below average because of the poor weather early in the year.

Despite the \$30,000 local match required for the ISTEPA work, the Traction Division ended the season in the black, although it will be tight as we approach the start of the operating season in May. Total ridership since August 28, 1971 is 1,131,340.

When you look at the table, note the ratio of tokens (fare paying passengers) to total regular service passengers. The paying passengers account for only 71 percent of the total. The rest are children under age five and members, all of whom ride free. The percentage of free riders has increased in recent years.

Thanks again to **John and Kathy Prestholdt** for compiling these statistics.

According to the visitor's register in the Linden Hills Depot, our passengers came from 35 states and seven foreign countries - Australia, Canada (five

different provinces), France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Comments included: "Got me to join and volunteer!" "Wheeee!!!" "MTM Member - Good job guys!" "Neato Burrito." "Great memories!!!" "The greatest!" "I'm coming back soon [from Scotland]. Have the PCC ready!" "Great experience!" "A city treasure [from Boston]!" "Como-Harriet customers 1934 to 1954." "Worked on the line in '45!" "Conductor at Lake St. Station from Dec. 1925 & for 9 years, #2016." "Cowabunga!!!"

RAILROAD REPORT

-Eric Brom and Dick Kolter

The 1996 season was overall quite successful as all equipment worked well, the passenger count was up, merchandise sales were much improved and schedule changes were well received. Before the end of this winter the crews will have completed their bi-annual operational training, and the reorganization of administrative positions will be undertaken. Our crews have operated in a professional manner and retained the trust of the railroads we operate on.

This year locomotives NP 328 and NP 105 took care of most of the passenger train duties. The steam engine pulled the trains on the first and third weekend of the month, and for the first time ran regularly to Marine. #105 was in charge of the rest of the trips. This was a different steam-diesel schedule than in other years and seemed to work out quite well. #328 also made off-line trips to Wayzata, Stillwater and New Richmond. Since steam requires more crew than diesel, the more frequent steam trips stretched crew availability to the limit. Both engines performed well. The Federal Railroad Administration made its annual inspection in August and we passed with no problems.

Speaking of crews, it takes a tremendous team effort to make everything run smoothly. Stationmaster **Marv Mahre** (a permanent fixture at the Osceola depot, along with **Pat Kytola**) is always there directing and watching over everything. Occasionally situations have come up that required extra help. Either Pat or Marv are immediately on the telephone locating the necessary resources. An example of this occurred on Saturday September 20. A large, odd-sized nut had broken on #328, which put it out of commission. It was scheduled to operate on Sunday, but couldn't without a replacement part. A diligent search at Jackson Street Roundhouse by **Paul Dalleska** came up empty handed.

1996 Como-Harriet Ridership Totals

	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Days of service	14	27	31	31	11	3	117
#78 days	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
#78 psgrs.	0	0	134	223	0	0	357
#265 days	4	24	15	17	0	0	60
#265 psgrs.	381	7146	5756	5634	0	0	18,917
#1300 days	10	6	17	15	11	3	62
#1300 psgrs.	3325	2203	5546	4429	4214	696	20,413
#ETS-1 days	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
#ETS-1 psgrs.	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Tokens	2452	6165	7966	7037	2881	524	27,025
Reg. Psgrs.	3592	8752	10,986	9884	4049	696	37,959
Reg. trips	233	430	514	480	261	47	1965
Tokens/trip	10.5	14.3	15.5	14.7	11.0	11.1	13.0
Psgrs./trip	15.4	20.4	21.4	20.6	15.5	14.8	19.0
Charter psgrs.	114	597	450	502	165	0	1828
Total psgrs.	3706	9349	11,436	10,386	4214	696	39,787

Dennis Johnson arranged with a machine shop in Dresser to make the part. It was installed Saturday evening, and #328 made its Sunday schedule. **Dave Ahlgren**, Assistant Trainmaster, was always there to help, too. If an extra person was needed for a crew, or something needed to be taken care of, he could always be counted on.

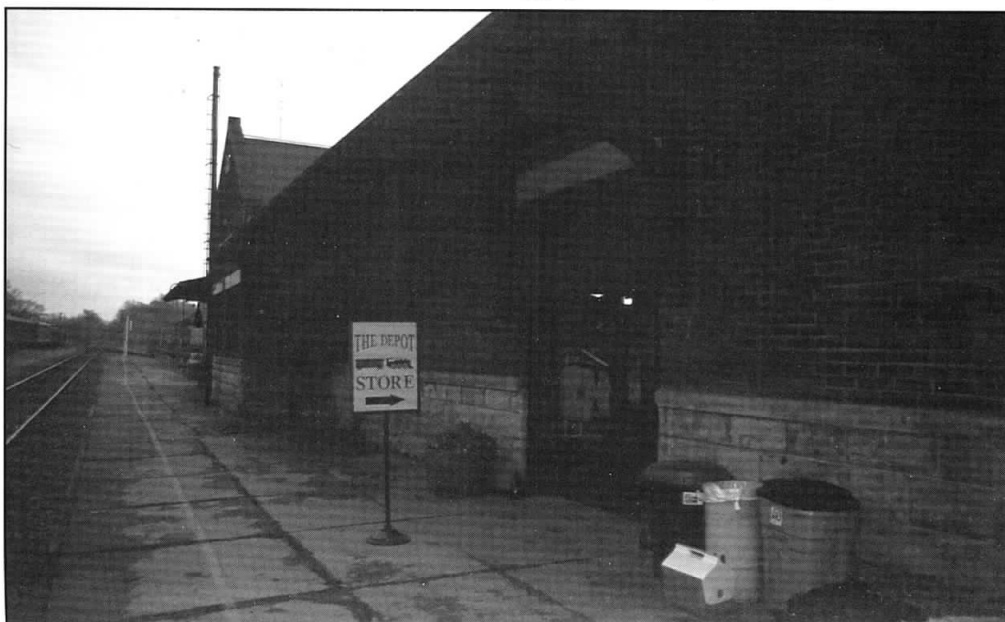
More passengers this year

Pat Kytola reports that 25,074 people rode the trains this year, compared to 20,040 last year. The table compares 1996 with 1995. Note that two fare categories, First Class and Family, were not offered this year. It was also the first year school specials ran to Marine. Dresser ridership probably declined because steam was not restricted to the Dresser run this year, and because the second Dresser trip was converted to a Marine trip during fall colors.

	1996	1995
Marine adult	7,266	3,728
Marine child	2,017	597
Marine family		2,195
Marine complimentary	2,193	641
Marine first class		939
Marine adult charter	4,805	5,752
Marine student	1,469	
Marine total	17,750	13,852
Dresser adult	1,828	2,026
Dresser child	728	407
Dresser family		963
Dresser complimentary	729	965
Dresser first class		118
Dresser student	803	577
Dresser total	4,088	5,056
Charters and specials	6,649	6,431
Total passengers	25,074	20,040



Charles Barthold and Karin Ostrand set up the Store on Rails inside #1102. New this year was a second store in the depot's "warm room", originally used to store freight that couldn't take the cold of the unheated main baggage room. Gary Ostrand photos.



The Semaphore newsletter

The Semaphore, a newsletter of the Railroad Division, has been in publication for about a year. It was started by Trainmaster **Morten Jorgensen** who edited the first two editions until he found someone willing to take over. **Norm Kerr** did so, but unfortunately passed away after only one issue. We (**Dick Kolter** and **Eric Brom**) volunteered to continue with the April issue and have been doing it ever since. **Fred Soop** gets the original copy and follows through with the printing and mailing tasks.

The Semaphore has been used to keep the division members informed as well as to distribute the crew schedules for both operating crew and car attendants during the season. Regular contributors and their columns have been **Morten Jorgensen**-Trainmaster's Corner, **Pat Kytola**-Tidbits from Osceola, **Nick Modders**-Road Foreman's Ramblings, **Charles Barthold**-Store News, and an editorial type column by **Dick Kolter**, usually on a safety, training or operational topic. **Jan Edstrom** provides the crew schedule and **Betty Ellingson** the attendant schedule. Also included are announcements of upcoming special events and the minutes of division meetings.

The ISTE A grant

In 1995 MTM successfully applied for an ISTE A grant to fund the restoration of three of the passenger cars stored at the arsenal. The \$240,000 grant is sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Office of Railroads and Waterways.

The cars to be restored are:

CB&Q North Coast Limited light-weight coach #598, built in 1950.

GN parlor car Twin Ports, built in 1920.

DM&IR heavyweight coach #30, built in 1918.

If money is available, NP heavy-weight coach #1370, built in 1915.

The money will be available to spend starting July 1997. First MTM must get the plans and paperwork together. The experience of the other ISTE A projects at Jackson Street, Excelsior and Lake Harriet has shown this to be a difficult undertaking. But it's the best chance ever to turn the arsenal derelicts into working equipment. **John Robinson** has volunteered to be the project manager.

Freight trains

Wisconsin Central's GP7's #4151 and 4159 provided power for the freight operations on the Dresser sub this summer and were kept at Dresser. MTM crews operated the weekly train

#328 in Dresser. Mike Miller photo.

designated by WC as L068. The second quarter of this year found the movement of over 200 cars, but the third and fourth quarters were much more normal, with about 50 cars each. During this winter, as in the past, the WC will leave an engine with the cars at Withrow and our crews will leave and tie up there. This is a great opportunity for our crews to operate and gain experience, as well as bringing in some additional revenue. Occasionally we also have been called to operate maintenance of way trains for the WC.

The Store on Rails

-Charles Barthold

The Store on Rails had an excellent season. We introduced a number of new products and a second location--the Depot Store in the "warm room" of the Osceola Depot. The depot store accounted for 56 percent of sales this year. It carried our complete selection, while we had snacks, drinks and a limited selection aboard #1102. We had over \$22,000 in revenue from all on-line and off-line operations, including three banner days. On Saturday October 5th we broke the \$900 in a single day mark; Saturday May 25th in Wayzata and Saturday September 21st when we were just shy of that mark.

All moneys advanced by the Railroad Division for the purchase of inventory have been repaid and there is money in the bank to bankroll the 1997 season.

"The Store on Rails" could not be a success without its volunteers. The past two seasons we have been very fortunate to have Girl Scouts from Troop 2001 as our primary volunteers, supervised by girls who have been working on their Gold Awards. This year's Gold Award candidates were **Miranda Clark, Kristine Shores, Kari Beckmann and Becky Bystom.**

Without them, plus **Pat Kytola, Betty Ellingson, Jan Edstrom** and the Osceola High School Business Club, we would never have done this well. Thank you.

That brings us to next season. We've run out of Girl Scouts--at least from this troop. (Here comes the volunteer plea!) You don't have to know an air brake from a dust bunny to help. Or do you know of a group (could be a church or school group, or whatever that is looking for a way to raise a little extra money? Either way, give **Charles Barthold** a call at (612) 529-3428. And hey, if Osceola is too far away, the

Air Touch Cellular filmed a TV ad at Osceola with #328. Larry Kytola photo.



Como-Harriet Streetcar Lines needs folks at the Linden Hills Depot, the Steamboat Minnehaha sells items in the streetcar #1809 ticket office, and the Jackson Street Roundhouse will (hopefully) be opening in 1997 and we'll want a store there.

Souvenir sales are important to all our operations. They provide a memory, free advertising and additional revenue. Can you find one day a month during our summer season to help one of our operations with their sales?

The seven car trains required on the peak fall color weekends were a bit much for #105, and it won't MU with #102, so Wisconsin Central geep #4151 was rented for the occasion. The fall consist is passing the cliffs south of the Osceola depot.

Dick Heine photo.

The Store on Rails sales recap

Item	1995	1996
Bandannas	59	71
Bears, RR teddy	24	29
Books, timetables	160	245
Bumper stickers	74	136
Buttons	4	158
Computer fonts	14	10
Hats	116	262
Key fobs	107	457
Magnets	261	889
Maps	6	9
Mugs	16	56
Ornaments	0	5
Patches	108	137
Pens	0	111
Pins	283	332
Playing cards	72	87
Postcards	3841	4091
Prints	12	24
Rock art	112	102
Snacks	2951	6839
Soda & water	2616	6070
Spikes	99	120
Tote bags	0	8
Train cards	97	174
T-shirts	67	291
Whistles	203	247

THE REAL STORY OF #328

For years the origins of NP 4-6-0 #328 have been unclear. Was it built in 1905 or 1907? Was it destined for Manchuria when the NP bought it? In the Fall 1996 issue of the Northern Pacific Railway Historical Association's Mainstreeter magazine, these questions are answered. MTM member **Lorenz P. Schrenk**, who is probably the leading authority on NP steam, has dug deep into the subject and emerged with answers.

#328 was one of 20 identical engines constructed in 1905 by American Locomotive Company (Alco) at their Rogers Locomotive Works subsidiary in Paterson, NJ for the Chicago Southern, which was building a line from Chicago to Terre Haute, IN. After six of them had been delivered, however, the CS ran into financial trouble and was unable to receive the remaining 14 engines.



The six 4-6-0's were transferred to its corporate sibling and Terre Haute connection, the Southern Indiana. In 1910 the two roads were merged as the Chicago, Terre Haute & Southeastern, which became part of the Milwaukee Road in 1921. At some later date, two of them went to the Wisconsin & Michigan, which had the same corporate ownership. The remaining four engines were scrapped in 1934.

Returning to 1906, Alco was stuck with the 14 undelivered engines and began shopping them around. One went to the Pullman Railroad, which switched the Pullman Company's manufacturing complex in Chicago. It appears to have survived into the late 1930's. The Nevada Northern was under construction in 1905-06 and bought one, which became their #20. It was probably scrapped in 1951.

Two of the engines actually went to the Manchurian Southern in China. In 1907, they were purchased by Mitsui & Co., a Japanese firm that ran railroads in China. Mitsui also bid on the ten remaining engines, but lost out to Northern Pacific.

NP took delivery of #320-329 in 1907. Although apparently they were designed and largely constructed in 1905, either completion work or some modifications caused Alco to put 1907 on their builder's plates.

Photos in Schrenk's article show that #328 was delivered with a high mounted, oil headlight, and with the air pump on the right side. Members of the class are pictured in the 1930's in the grey-boilered passenger color scheme.

Except for #325 and 326, which ran in Montana, the S-10's stayed in Minnesota and North Dakota. #329 was the first to be scrapped in 1929, and by 1933 only #321 and 328 remained. #321 was scrapped in 1946. #328 survived due to light axle loadings on the Grantsburg branch's St. Croix River bridge. In 1950 it was sold to the Minnesota Railfans Association, who in turn gave it to the City of Stillwater for display in the park by the river. MTM leased it in 1976 and returned it to service in 1981.



TODD'S LAST TRIP

-Dick Kolter

Everyone will agree that **Todd Rust** was a tireless worker for the Railroad Division and never gave up even when his illness made it difficult to do anything. Although he was not able to participate very actively in the operations of the trains this summer, he continued with the administrative duties very courageously. Only six days before his death he chaired the division's annual meeting.

His last trip on October 28 was quite successful and perfectly carried out. In looking back now, I think it is a trip I will never forget.

I had, for some time, been signed up to make the annual end of season shuttle run to get the equipment back to Jackson Street. The day before the trip I was told by **Nick Modders**, who I had thought would be in the 105 with me, that Todd was feeling up to a trip and wanted to go along. So he, Nick, would drive the car back to Jackson Street after delivering the crew to Osceola.

In his frail condition Todd was able to climb into the engine by himself. I helped only by getting his grip up there. He ran the train almost unassisted and flawlessly all the way back to Jackson Street, in a manner that no one could tell how seriously ill he was. His mental capacity was perfect.

With only the final leg of the journey left as we waited at St. Anthony for other trains to clear, Todd called the BNSF dispatcher in Fort Worth to get authority to move onto their track to Jackson Street. The following discussion between engineer and dispatcher was unlike any I had ever heard before. The dispatcher wanted to know more about this "NP105" that was about to enter his territory. Todd alertly sensed this man wanted to know about our operation and told him exactly who we were and what we do. Several more questions from the dispatcher about our people and equipment followed with Todd giving good and precise answers. I thought that Todd was going to sell this dispatcher some tickets to ride our trains next summer, but the signal cleared and it was time for Todd to complete his last trip.

I hope we can all remember something like this about Todd. He was promoting MTM right to the end. Todd, we are all going to miss you.

Pallbearers at the funeral included MTM members Morten Jorgensen, Barry Karlberg and Nick Modders.

EXCELSIOR REPORT

-Bill Graham

Boat building issues resolved

The Excelsior City Council helped the Museum to resolve a difficult issue concerning the location and appearance of MTM's Excelsior boat building. The Council had granted a conditional use permit in 1990 for a temporary pole building, not ordinarily permitted in the city, where MTM could restore the Minnehaha. The permit would expire when the boat was restored or after 10 years, whichever came first. MTM requested a pole building because we could not afford better at the time. We chose the site near the City public works yard because it is near a deep-water boat launch ramp, it is not visible from the lakeshore, and it requires no use of city streets to move the boat. In addition, the land is publicly owned by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, thereby saving the cost of expensive Minnetonka area real estate.

It turns out that the site is the only one available to MTM for a maintenance building near Lake Minnetonka. Minnehaha cannot be maintained and stored outdoors over the winter, since the complicated, condensing steam plant would suffer breakage of expensive parts due to freezing. If MTM lost the Excelsior building, we would need to consider moving the boat to another body of water.

This Fall, a few neighborhood residents objected to the building on grounds that it is too large, unsightly and incompatible with a residential area. They persuaded the Excelsior Planning Commission to recommend revocation of MTM's conditional use permit on grounds that since the boat now is restored, the terms of the original permit cause it to expire, thus forcing MTM to remove the building. The Excelsior City Council considered the recommendation in November at a meeting heavily attended by area residents and MTM members.

Leo Meloche, Mike Miller and others told the Council that boat operations depend upon having the maintenance building and that no other land parcel with ramp access is available. They reminded the Council that Minnehaha historically belongs to Lake Minnetonka, and that the first operating season was supported hugely by the Twin Cities community. Leo outlined plans to improve the building's appearance and to provide landscaping.



Minnehaha's torpedo stern produces no wake. Aaron Isaacs photo.

Residents, business owners, history buffs and friends of the Museum turned out in numbers to say many nice things about MTM and the Minnehaha. After three hours of discussion, outgoing Mayor **John Anderson** polled the Council and found support for granting permanent status to MTM's building. The resolution asks MTM to observe parking regulations, provide landscaping and improve the appearance of the building, install water and sewer

utilities and add sprinklers for fire protection. The resolution passed unanimously with mayor and council members expressing their hope that Minnehaha will continue to operate from Excelsior for years to come: Work will begin next Spring on a new facade to break up the large cube appearance of the building. Trees will be planted along the south side of the LRT Trail and to the east of the building. Mayor Anderson, the council members and

many friends of MTM around Lake Minnetonka deserve a round of thanks for their help with this difficult issue.

Curator staffs new office

This Fall, the Steamboat Division hired **Heather Worthington** to be curator and administrative officer for the division. Heather has a degree in museum management and ten years experience in museum administration. She reports to **Leo Meloche** while working from the division's new permanent office and souvenir shop located on County Road 19 west of Excelsior near the Smithtown Road intersection. Office and shop are open to the public year round. The address is:

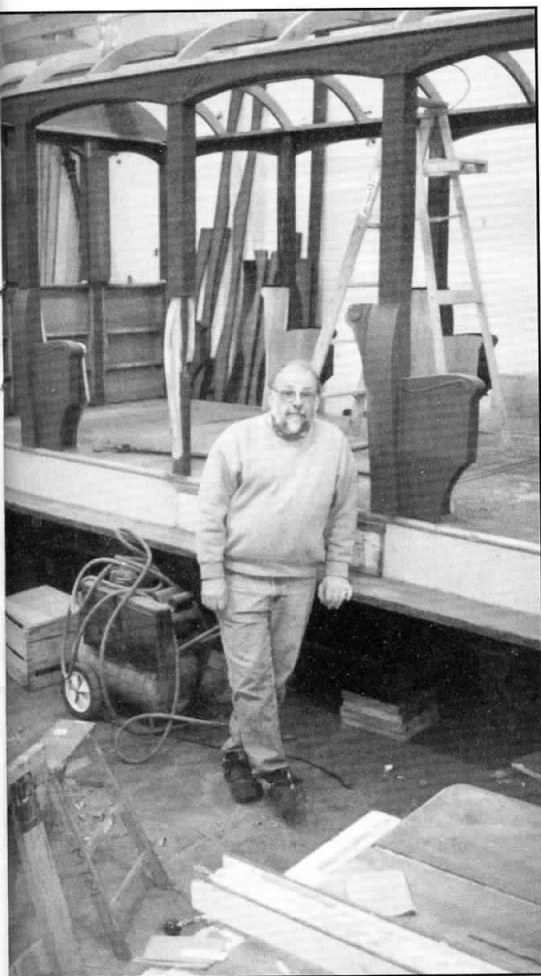
MTM Streetcar/Steamboat Division
24324 Smithtown Road
Tonka Bay, MN 55331
(612) 474-2115

Winter season improvements

Last summer's operation showed that Minnehaha's upper deck can be stifling hot in the sunshine and uninhabitable during rain storms, causing passengers to overcrowd the lower deck. Twin City Rapid Transit dealt with these same problems back around 1910 when they installed canvas awnings to give upper deck passengers a bit of protection. Following TCRT's design, members **Jim Ogland**, **Cliff Brandhorst** and **Pete Weir** designed an awning which **Duane Smith Canvas Works** of Spring Park will fabricate and install this Winter. With the new awning, Minnehaha again will not fit inside her building, and so **Lester Buildings** will raise the insulated false ceiling another three feet.

Last summer, crews noticed that Minnehaha's boiler had trouble keeping up with demand for steam when running at full throttle. This fall, **Virgil Buhaneck** discovered that due to operating with a fuel injection pressure of 130 pounds instead of the 180 pounds recommended by the boiler manufacturer, fuel was not reaching the forward area of the fire box. Virgil also found that the boiler had the wrong fuel injection nozzles. These problems would have resulted in inefficient firing. Virgil replaced a noisy centrifugal pump to the oil separation box. He also found and removed a wad of cylinder packing that had lodged in a return water line.

Jim Hewett found that Minnehaha can run successfully without adding 10 percent paraffin to the steam oil which lubricates the engine cylinders. This had made froth in the boiler due to



Cliff Brandhorst is working on one of the Valleyfair gasoline engine trolleys inside the Clark Oil building in Excelsior. Bill Graham photo.

recirculation of condensate water and caused problems throughout the summer. Crews discontinued the paraffin two weeks before the end of operation, and Jim found no damage to rings or cylinder walls. **Pete Weir** removed and cleaned all five electric bilge pumps. **Tim Reichel** and **Gordy Pedersen** have been painting and repairing damaged trim and upper deck railings. **Neil Henninger** found and repaired a gas leak in the forward compartment which runs the boiler's pilot light re-igniter. In all, Minnehaha's power and mechanical systems have proven to be well designed, operationally reliable and quite tolerant of human foibles.

Excelsior Streetcar doings

Building a small streetcar operation in Excelsior has proven a bit harder than expected. This Fall, it was decided to proceed with an initial streetcar maintenance building using Museum funds after it was found that ISTE money would not be available before next Spring. A contract was let for the

building, but at the last minute, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District ordered a halt to construction until additional on-site ponding could be provided. It happens that the building site is immediately adjacent to a large ponding area which the watershed district decided would be inadequate.

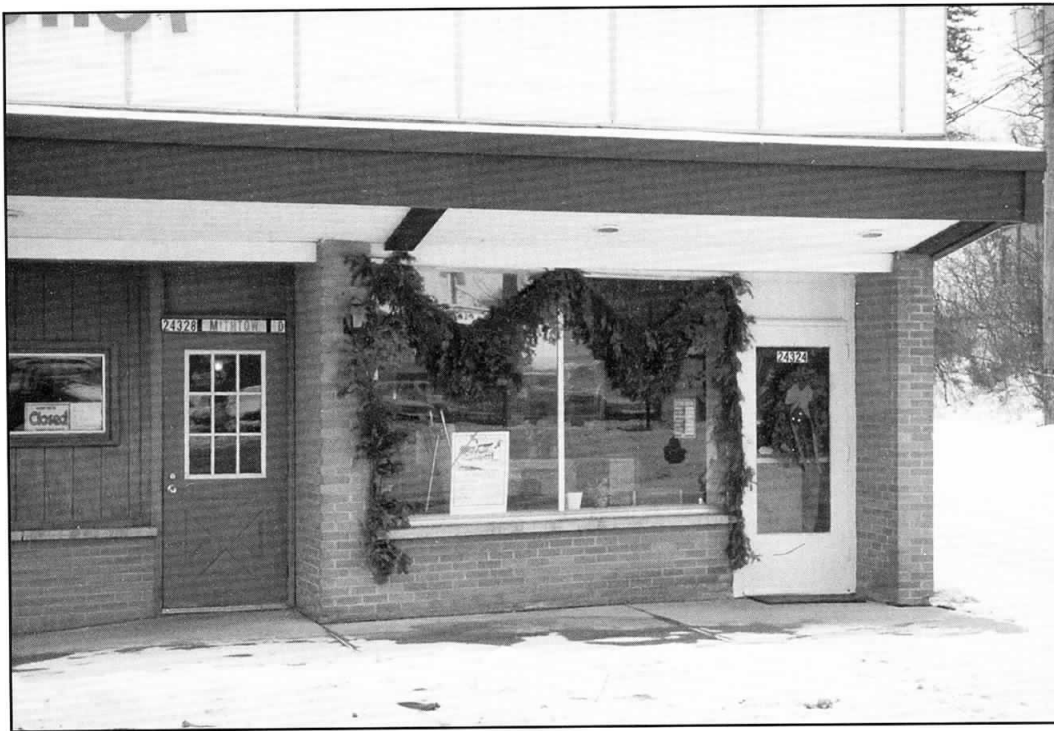
Without the building, restoration of TCRT #1239 cannot begin until next year. Accordingly, **Bob Dumas** and **Cliff Brandhorst** set about overhauling one of the two ex-Valley Fair, gasoline powered single truckers purchased by MTM two years ago. The work is proceeding in donated space in the former Clark Oil building near downtown Excelsior. The car is a steel, fiberglass and wood representation of an 1890's open car, and though not of museum quality, it will be an acceptable temporary substitute for the authentic electric car that will come in the future. The cars are part of a group of four. The other two were sold by MTM to the Minnesota Zephyr, and shuttle passengers from one end of Stillwater to the other during the summer.

The car rides on a fabricated truck and utilizes wheels, chain drive and friction clutch assemblies from modern track maintenance machines. The carbody is built with a welded tubular steel

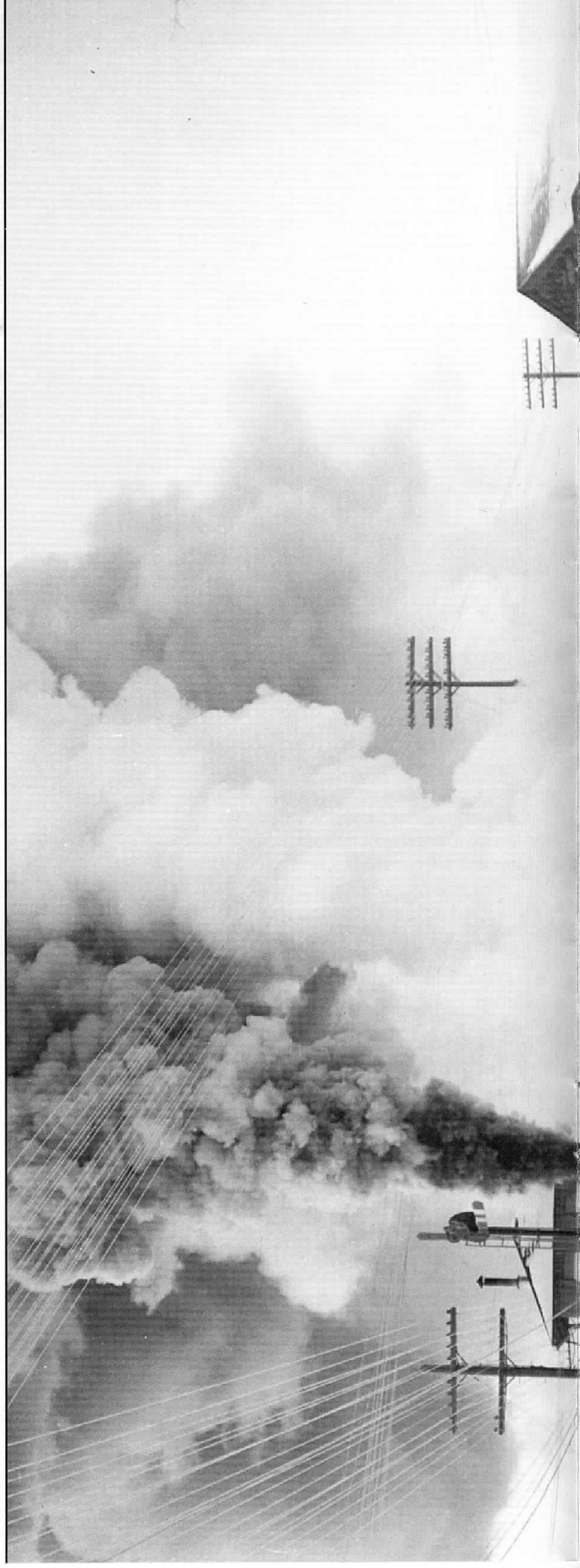
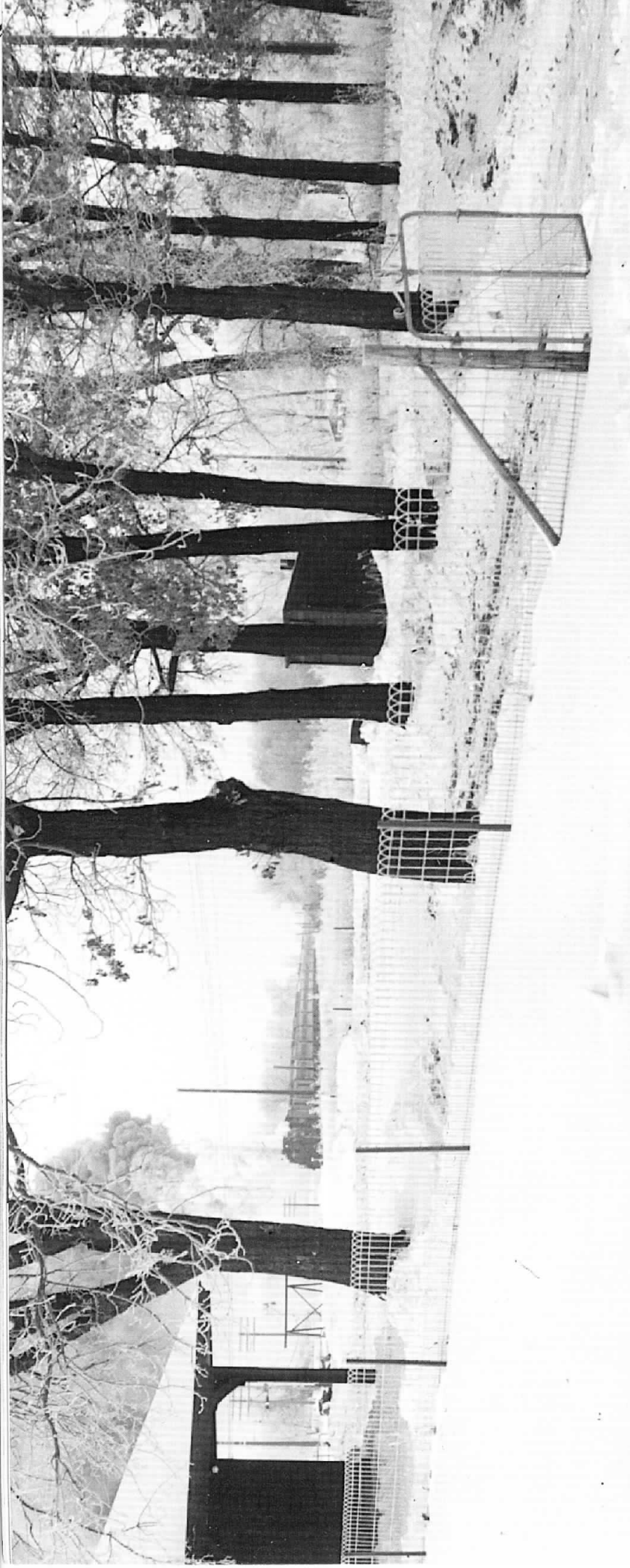
underframe and uprights which are covered with paneling of wood and fiberglass. **Bob Dumas** has framed a new clerestory roof of cherry planks to replace the steel and canvas awning roof used in Valley Fair service. The car carries wooden applique decorations which resemble detailing authentic to real 1890's single truckers. The Wisconsin air-cooled engine has been sent out for rebuilding. Plans call for the car to be ready for operation by Spring, at which time track construction is expected to begin.

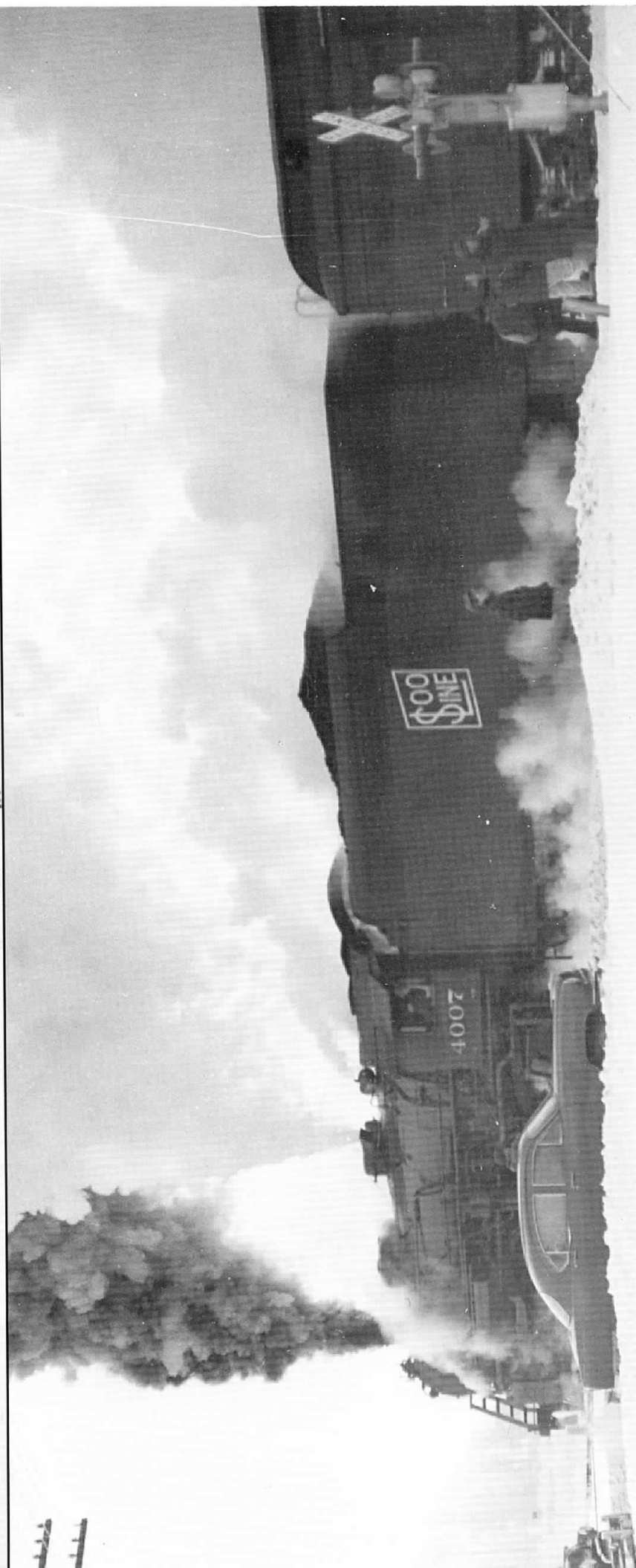
Volunteers needed

The Steamboat Division needs volunteers. Those interested in becoming Steamboat Minnehaha Captains, Engineers, Pursers, Ticket Sellers, maintenance personnel or doing streetcar restoration and operation, or museum store sales, should call 474-2115. Or write MTM 24324 Smithtown Road, Excelsior, MN 55331, or stop by the Minnehaha restoration building at 140 George Street in Excelsior any Saturday morning. Training classes will be taught through the winter and into the spring. Work sessions on the boat are held Wednesday evenings 6:30 - 10:00 p.m. and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the boat building. There's plenty of work for all who want to lend a hand.



MTM's new office in the shopping center at County Road 19 and Smithtown Road in Shorewood, just west of Excelsior. Bill Graham photo.

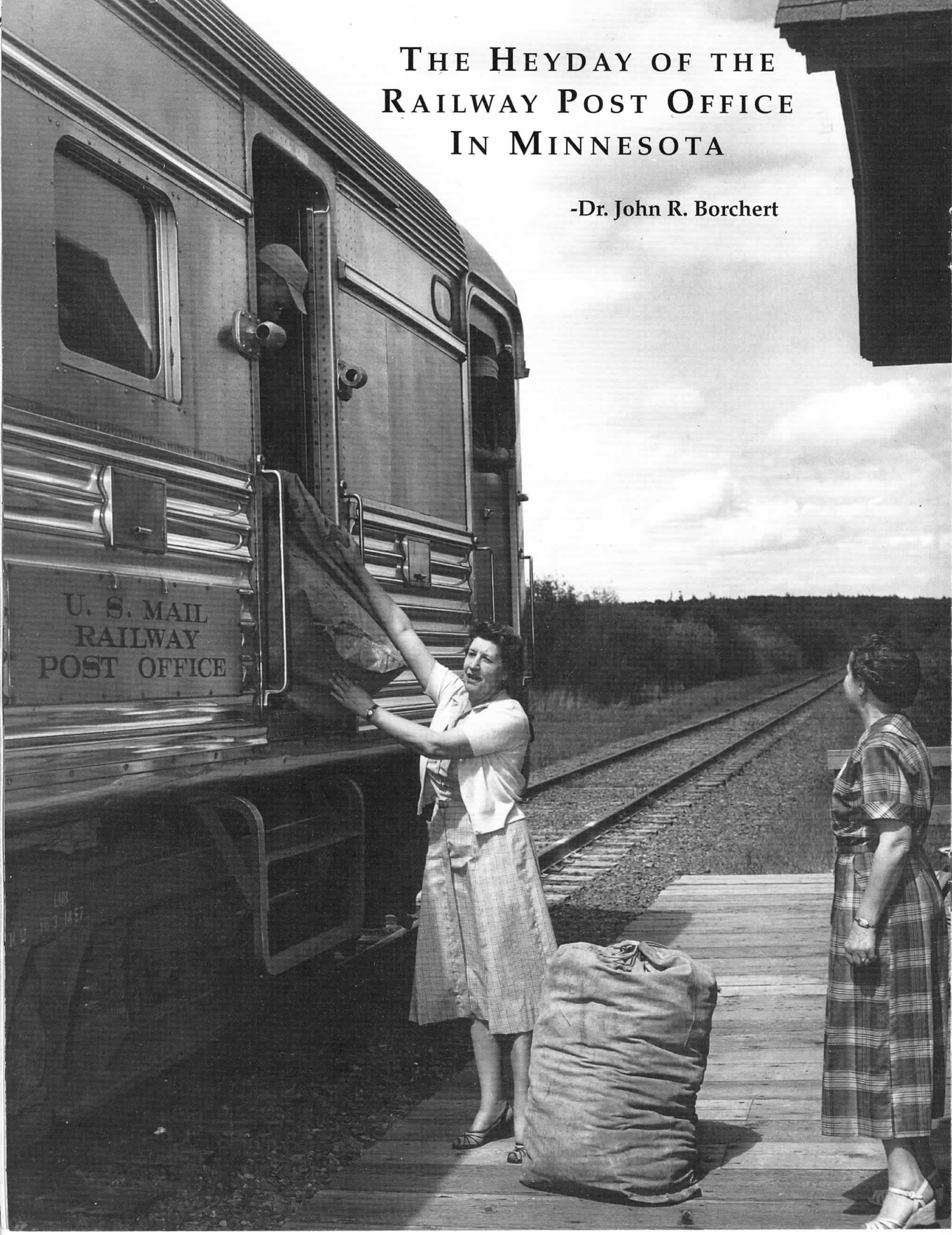




Bob Schumacher recorded Soo Line 4-8-2 #4007 as it passed the Northern Pacific Skalley Line junction at Bald Eagle with a ski special bound for Dresser, sometime in 1955. The railfans were out in force as it paused on the diamond and then accelerated across Highway 61.

THE HEYDAY OF THE RAILWAY POST OFFICE IN MINNESOTA

-Dr. John R. Borchert



When you ride in the Railway Post Office in MTM's Northern Pacific triple combine #1102, do you wonder about the national system that embraced that little 15-foot, one-man compartment on a short run in North Dakota? Believe me, it was some system. In the early 1920s there were 2,300 RPO runs between pairs of U.S. cities, for a total distance of 204,000 miles. An average of more than 4,100 trains each day carried RPO cars. More than 13,000 regular clerks, and many extras, worked the mail in those cars. Through their extended arms—the Star Routes linking isolated post offices with the nearest rail line, and the city and rural delivery system—the railway mail routes connected everyone in America with everyone else.

The first "information superhighway"

The national railway postal system reached its peak importance in the early 1920s. Before that, the last pieces of the U.S. rail network were still being built. And after that, airmail and, more important, long distance phone began to dominate the growth of person-to-person and business-to-business correspondence. But in the early '20s, mail trains were still the communication network of the American society and economy. To use today's jargon, they were the "information superhighway". In 1920, 91 percent of all business and personal communication between cities moved by railway mail, while telegraph and telephone accounted for less than 10 percent.⁽¹⁾

Since retiring from the University of Minnesota, I've been studying the geography of the railway mail system at that time of peak importance. My interest stems partly from 35 years of professional study and teaching about the geography of the American system of cities and towns. The mail communication network was a vital part of the development of that system.

But another part of my interest is sentimental. My Dad was a railway postal clerk who covered one and one-half million miles in mail cars between Chicago and Cincinnati—a year on the Monon-B&O and 35 years on the Pennsylvania. Watching him studying for exams, correcting schemes, and making out trip reports was my introduction to the world beyond the horizon and also to homework and mental discipline.

End of the line at the end of an era. One week before its discontinuance, in July 1957, DM&IR train 5 from Duluth has reached the end of its run in Winton, where Postmistress Mayme Gustafson is collecting the mail. Minneapolis Tribune photo, Star-Tribune collection.

This article is a progress report from a larger project which is national in scope. But it's also a request for help—corrections, recollections, maps, and photographs that might come to your mind as you read.

In the 1920s the Railway Postal Service, by then 60 years old, had been organized into 15 divisions covering the entire country (Figure 1). Thirteen of the divisions were defined by groups of states. The other two were defined by the main lines of the New York Central between New York and Chicago and the Pennsylvania from New York through Pittsburgh to Chicago and St. Louis. The Tenth Division, covering Minnesota, Wisconsin, North and South Dakota, was headquartered in St. Paul. The Tenth was the country's largest in both number of RPO runs and number of RPO miles (Figure 2). Farther east the runs were shorter, and farther west they were fewer.

Each railway mail route was assigned to a division. RPO runs were manned mainly by clerks who sorted mail en route, although some clerks worked in "Terminal" RPOs, at the post offices in major cities. There were also more than

20,000 miles of Closed Pouch (CP) runs, which carried pouches of mail pre-sorted at the terminals and post offices, and taken off or on the trains by agents along the way. The heavier RPO runs also carried storage cars, filled with not only mail to be worked in the RPO car en route but also large amounts of pre-sorted closed pouch and package mail moving directly between major cities. And there were "transfer clerks" who kept track of the storage cars at major terminals and junctions. But the RPO cars were the nerve centers of the system, the key indicators of the importance of any route.

The schedules were the bibles

I think the single most important source of data on the Railway Mail System is the Schedules. They were the bibles of the RPO clerks then, and they are still gold mines of information. They contain the schedule of every train that hauled mail on every railway mail route that operated in the country. Not only do they show arrival and departure times at the endpoints and at main mail-route junctions along the way, but they also show the number of linear feet the Post

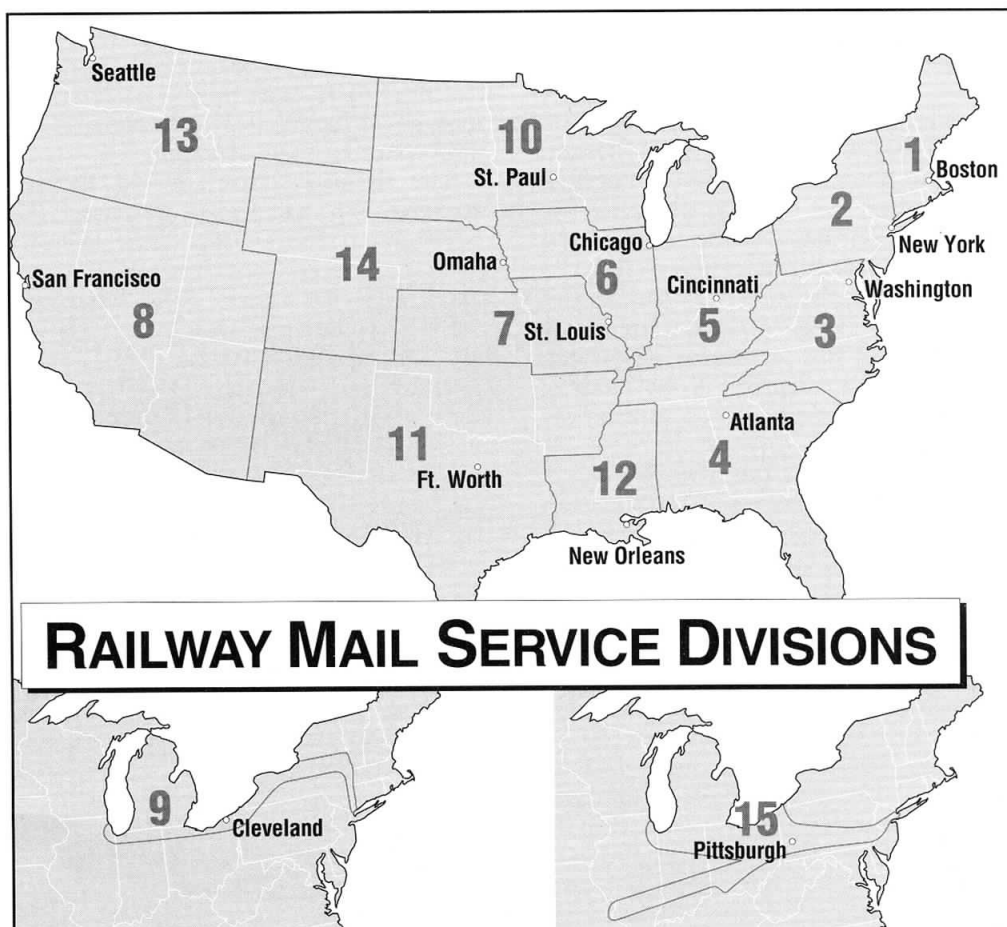


Figure 1. Railway Mail Service divisions in the early 1920s. Cities on the map were division headquarters. The Ninth Division included the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, the main line of the New York Central between New York and Chicago, and "designated collateral lines". The Fifteenth was the main line of the Pennsylvania from New York, via Pittsburgh, to Chicago and St. Louis, and designated collateral lines.



Train 6, the "Day Express" on the Chicago and Minneapolis RPO, near Newport, headed for Chicago on a summer morning in 1920. At that time Number 6 carried a full 60-foot car from Minneapolis to Chicago (appears to be the second car in this picture), an additional 40-foot compartment from St. Paul to Milwaukee (first car). Two storage cars followed on this day. The train symbolized the heavy mail volume on this nationally important run. Helmut Kroening photo. Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Office department leased on those trains to carry mail. By the early 1920s, RPO footages were in modules of 15, 30, and 60 feet. Closed pouch and storage space was leased in a wider range between 3 and 60 feet. Overall, the space leased very closely reflected the amount of mail that moved on each route and the relative importance of the route in the total national communication picture.

Although they were published regularly for each division for many years, few of the schedules have been preserved. The collection at the Railway Mail Service Library, in Alexandria, VA, is probably the most complete in existence. Through the courtesy of the RMS library's owner and curator, Dr. Frank Scheer, I was able to assemble and borrow a set of complete, comparable schedules which spread over the years 1923 to 1927, centered on 1925. The share of mail carried by rail had already begun to slip between 1920 and 1925. But the number of trains and railway mail runs had not yet reflected the slippage.

The *St. Paul and Williston* RPO was typical of the heavy, main line runs (schedule in Figure 3). It was carried on Great Northern trains through Willmar and over the then-new cut-off between Fargo and Minot. Three daily trains, including the *Oriental Limited*, *Glacier Park Limited*, and *Fast Mail*, ran through to Seattle, although one each way used the old route via Grand Forks and the *St. Cloud* line between Fargo

and the Twin Cities. The full run was actually divided into segments by changes in both the crews and the number of trains- or the mail space footage- at Fargo, and by changes in the mail space footage, at Minot.

The through runs carried 30-foot apartments or full 60-foot RPO cars; the local runs, 15-foot apartments or, in some cases, only closed pouch compartments. The 15-foot cars carried one or two clerks; three to five manned the 30-foot cars; six or more worked in the 60s. They sorted mail for post offices and exchanges with connecting runs all along the line. Each clerk had to have in his mind the maps and schedules of scores of RPO runs and the map position of every post office in the Northwest. The job took the strength to handle heavy bags, the knowledge and dexterity to put every letter into the correct pigeon hole as quickly as you could blink, and the stamina to keep ahead of the continuous flow of mail for 8 or 10 hours or more, all day or all night, in the swaying and jolting car, plus advance time in the terminal. In the words of a young, novice RMS clerk writing in 1904, the work "... needs the mind of a college professor, the brawn of a longshoreman, and the agility of an acrobat".

In contrast, the *Bemidji and Sauk Center* RPO was typical of many branch line runs (Figure 4). One clerk usually handled a 15-foot compartment on the 5- or 6-hour run; some were shorter. He probably made the round trip each

work day. On this line, he exchanged mail with the *Duluth-Grand Forks*, *Duluth-Thief River Falls*, and *Twin Cities-International Falls* trains at Bemidji; with the NP's *St. Paul and Miles City* at Wadena; and with the *St. Paul and Minot* RPO at Sauk Center. And he had to be ready for an exchange at a station along the line every few minutes.

The Schedules included tables like these two for hundreds of closed-pouch routes as well as the RPO runs. From them I have compiled, for every segment of every RPO and every inter-city Closed Pouch run, the length of the run, the number of trains and the number of feet of space leased per week. By multiplying the number of miles times the linear footage of space I have calculated the weekly "haul"—the number of foot-miles—for each segment. From National Archives data available for limited comparison, I find that over-all the calculated haul is almost perfectly correlated with the actual amount of money the Post Office Department paid to have the mail moved.

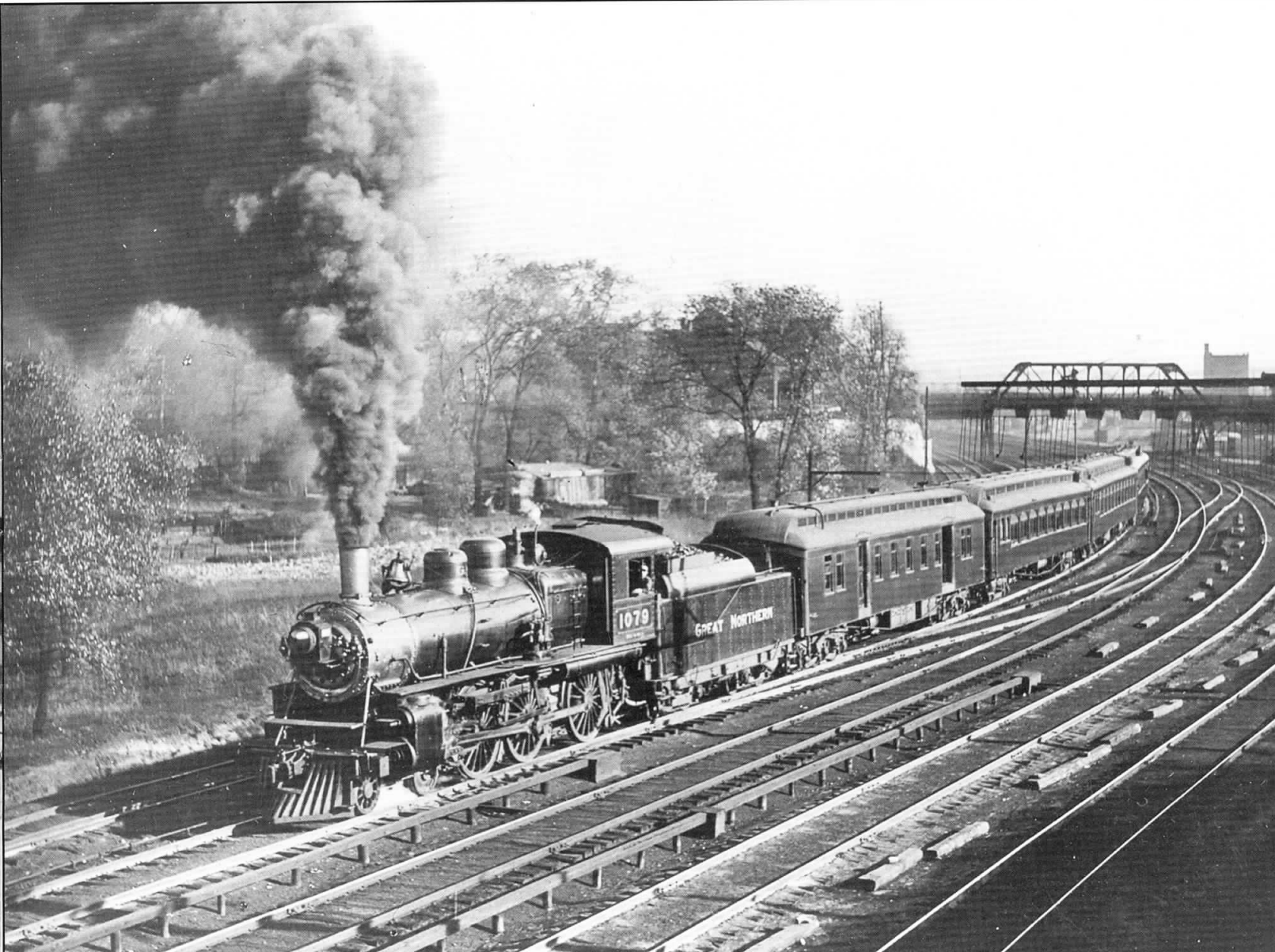
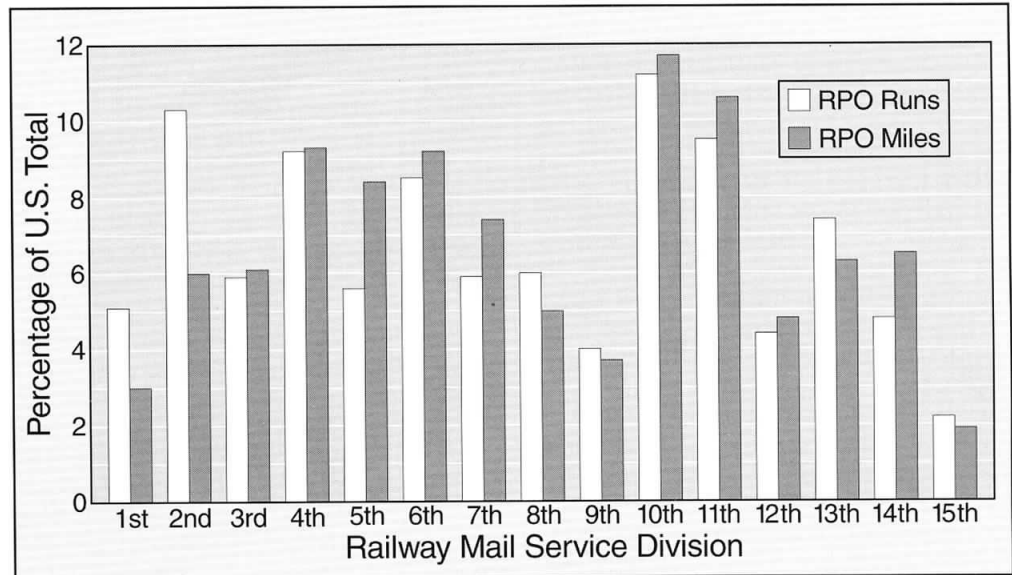
Although the Tenth led all other divisions in number of RPO runs and miles, it did not lead in its share of the nation's RPO haul (Figure 5). The Fifth and Sixth, headquartered in Cincinnati and Chicago, were larger. They had somewhat fewer trains and miles, but they had many more 30- and 60-foot or heavier runs.

Focus on Minnesota

I have focused this report on the mail runs which either had an endpoint in Minnesota or passed through the state in the early 1920s. It was an impressive pattern—76 RPOs and a handful of CP routes. They not only linked the Eastern U.S. with the Pacific Northwest, and the Upper Midwest with the rest of the country and Canada, but they also moved the mail among 1,200 post offices within the state (Figure 6). Most of the runs were assigned to the Tenth division; but those whose mileage was mainly in Iowa were in the Sixth.

The GN Winnipeg Limited carried a 30-foot post office to Barnesville in the St. Paul and Minot RPO and on to the Canadian boundary in the St. Vincent and Barnesville. With the mail car door open, the clerks could capture a breeze on this summer day in 1921, as the train climbed the Trout Creek valley a few minutes after its 5:05 p.m. departure from the St. Paul Union Depot. Helmut Kroening photo. Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Figure 2. The share of the nation's RPO miles and runs in each of the fifteen Railway Mail Service divisions in the early 1920s. The Tenth Division—Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota—was the leader in both number and miles of RPOs. If you compare this graph with the maps you see how the number of runs and miles were greatest in the highly developed Northeast and Midwest, least in both the sparsely developed West and the populous but less urbanized South.



The "Radical Tenth"

The clerks were an interesting lot. The division was known as the "Radical Tenth" in the turbulent times of the rise of the labor movement. James Elliott, a clerk who lived in Minneapolis, was a leader in the organization of the National Association of Railway Postal Clerks (later the Railway Mail Association) in 1891, and he founded the national Railway Post Office magazine in 1899 as the organ of the Association, advocating better working conditions. In January, 1911, clerks on the *Tracy and Pierre* RPO (a run on the C&NW line from Chicago via Winona and southern Minnesota to the Black Hills) initiated the only strike in the history of the RMS. The two months of the strike saw firings and repression by the division superintendent and a schism between higher officials and the lower-level clerks and inspectors. Concessions to the clerks followed as mail piled up and the public took notice and finally became noisy.

Meanwhile, the RMA split between conservative and progressive wings. The progressives were led by Carl Van Dyke, a clerk from Alexandria who ran on the Great Northern between St. Paul and Fargo. Van Dyke was fired for his activities in 1914, ran for congress, and was elected. In Congress he worked for the cause of improved pay, retirement, and safety for RMS employees. William M. Collins, from a small town near Madison, WI, was a clerk on the Milwaukee Road's *Chicago and Minneapolis* RPO. He led a revolt in the

Railway Mail Association resulting in the installation of a progressive slate of officers in 1915. The new officers were supported in congress by Senators Robert La Follette of Wisconsin and William Borah of Idaho, and also by erstwhile-RPO-clerk, Representative Van Dyke of Minnesota. Under Collins' leadership the RMA affiliated with the American Federation of Labor in 1917.⁽²⁾

Small town origins

Even on the major runs between the Twin Cities, Chicago, and the West, the majority of clerks hailed from smaller cities and towns, mostly along the route or near it. It's likely that most of them continued to live in or near those places and commuted or dead-headed to the endpoints of their runs to go to work. In many cases, a cluster of clerks came from the same community. For example, of 167 clerks on the *Chicago and Minneapolis* RPO in 1911, 17 or one in ten came from Portage, WI—more than double the number from Chicago and more than half the number from all of the Twin Cities area.⁽³⁾

Why was the Railway Mail Service in those years especially attractive to young men from smaller towns? Did the pay and security look better? Was it the vision of bigger, more exciting places beyond the horizon? Both were probably factors motivating my Dad to join the Railway Mail Service. He came from a small town and chose to keep living there. For three decades he dead-headed more than 200 miles to go to work at the Cincinnati end of his run.

The Twin Cities' node

The Twin Cities ranked eighth among the top ten railway mail centers in the country, measured by the capacity of originating and terminating RPO runs (Figure 7). Chicago, of course, was in a class by itself. After Chicago, New York led all others, with Kansas City edging Pittsburgh and St. Louis as a somewhat surprising third.

Several of the major eastern cities—notably Philadelphia and Buffalo—were well down in the ranking because the heavy RPOs serving them ran through and did not terminate there. Large cities on the geographic edge of the system—notably Boston and Detroit—fell short because they had major RPOs radiating to only one quadrant. The absence of southern and western centers, except Atlanta, reflects the still-nascent economic development of the West and the still-lagging development of the South in the early 1920s.

The Chicago runs in the Transcontinental Corridor

Among the main lines radiating from the Twin Cities, the transcontinental corridor between Chicago and the Pacific Northwest carried the bulk of the mail haul (Figure 8). In that corridor, the *Chicago and Minneapolis* RPO, on the Milwaukee Road, was the leader. (Clerks called it the "Chic and Min", and St. Paul was actually the endpoint for most runs.) In fact, the "Chic and Min" was the fifth heaviest run in the U.S., measured by total scheduled RPO and

15-foot RPOs converging at Blue Earth were part of the dense network of branch lines that criss-crossed southern Minnesota. Westbound Belle Plaine and Sanborn RPO and northbound Lake Crystal and Des Moines runs meet on a summer day in 1910. Minnesota Historical Society collection.



storage space. The only heavier runs were the NYC's New York-Chicago, the Pennsylvania's New York-Pittsburgh and New York-Washington, and the Boston and Albany-New Haven's Boston-New York.

At Chicago the "Chic and Min" discharged mountains of pouches which clerks had sorted en route for New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, for connecting RPOs to all major eastern, southern, and southwestern cities, and for trans-Atlantic ports. Westbound the clerks received other mountains of pouches from lines entering Chicago. The Pittsburgh-Chicago, New York-Chicago, and Cincinnati-Chicago runs turned over pouches already sorted for Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Washington, and Canada, and for the cities of St. Paul, Minneapolis, Portland, and Seattle. Hundreds of those pouches had to be re-sorted in more detail for post-offices en route, connecting lines, and continuing runs beyond the Twin Cities.

Overnight runs 57 westbound and 54 eastbound were exclusive mail and express trains. They carried double 60-foot RPO cars, while six more trains carried single 60-foot cars. All carried strings of storage cars, some regularly scheduled, some extra. Part of the storage mail would be pulled into the RPO cars and sorted en route; still more had already been sorted in Chicago and points east for the Twin Cities and other major centers on to the northwest. Extra storage cars were often loaded with magazines, catalogs, phone directories, and advertising mail from giant printing houses in Chicago and eastern cities, and intermittent surges of trans-Atlantic mail from the port of New York.

Those rich arteries of the American economic circulation system were tempting to the dwindling breed of train robbers. One RPO car on Number 57 was the object of the greatest mail robbery in history at Rondout, IL, a junction north of Chicago, in 1924.⁽⁴⁾

The C&NW's Chicago and St. Paul RPO provided a second major route to Chicago as well as to Madison and the industrial centers of southern Wisconsin. Connecting runs from Merrilan, WI, linked the Twin Cities with Wausau, Green Bay, and the Fox Valley. Westbound the Chicago and St. Paul fed southern Minnesota, South Dakota's James Valley, and the Black Hills on a connecting run from Elroy, WI, through Winona and Mankato.

Figure 3. To do their work, RPO clerks had to remember hundreds of these tables. This one is the listing for the St. Paul and Williston RPO (main line of the Great Northern) in the Tenth Division Schedule of Mail Trains published for September, 1925. Bold-face times are PM. Circle and dagger symbols beside the names of some stations signify certain transfer services performed at junctions. Distant major junctions and terminals on continuing runs west of Williston are italicized. Bold-face numbers at the top of each column signify trains with RPOs; light-face numbers are trains carrying only closed pouch mail. Bold-face numbers below the table show the linear feet of RPO space leased by the U.S. Post Office Department on each numbered train. The run divided itself naturally into segments at points where the number of trains or the footage of RPO space changed—in this case, Fargo and Minot. Accompanying tables, not included here, showed the space for closed pouch and storage mail. Lengthy accessory listings specified where, and for what post offices or other RPOs, mail was to be exchanged.

Figure 4. The listing for the Bemidji and Sauk Center RPO, a local run on the GN. The bold-face annotation in lower left indicates that both trains carried only 15 feet of leased RPO space.

The Main Line runs to the West and Canada

Heaviest of the western transcontinental runs was the Great Northern's St. Paul and Williston. It carried the only 60-foot RPO cars, as well as strings of storage cars, between the Twin Cities and Seattle. While the Williston used the cut-off between Fargo and Minot, the St. Paul and Minot RPO used the original GN transcontinental line from Fargo through Grand Forks to Minot. The Williston ran to Fargo via Willmar and Breckenridge; the Minot used the St. Cloud-Fergus Falls route. Together they carried transcontinental mail to the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, and the port cities of the Orient. And along the way they fed the GN's many branch line RPOs from the Red River Valley to the Cascades.

★ ST. PAUL & WILLISTON R. P. O.

G. N. Ry. Route 110,741 pt., 614.37 miles.

East Division runs—
St. Paul to Fargo—260.98 miles.
Clerks divide runs at Fargo, N. D.

West Division runs—
Fargo to Williston—353.39 miles.
Minot to Williston 120.32 miles.
Bedford to Minot 192.41 miles.

E. Div. Dist. 3
W. Div. Dist. 7

Mountain Time west of Williston

9cu	3a	13b	27a	5-10-1925	2a	10a	14b	28a
7 00	10 45	9 25	8 45	Lv. St. Paul, Minn.	Ar. 7 30	7 15	6 20	8 40
7 30	11 15	9 55	9 14	St. Paul to Minneapolis, Minn.	7 05	6 50	5 55	
7 40	11 30	10 05	9 18	Wayzata, Minn.	7 00	6 40	5 45	8 00
8 08	11 59	10 37	9 38	Willmar, Minn.	6 31	6 13	5 16	7 31
10 35	2 05	1 40	11 15	Benson, Minn.	4 05	3 35	2 30	5 05
10 45	2 15	2 25	11 17	Morris, Minn.	3 55	3 15	1 40	5 00
11 47	3 15	3 40	11 51	Campbell, Minn.	2 50	2 01	12 30	4 07
12 40	4 00	4 40	12 20	Brooklyn, Minn.	2 08	1 05	11 25	3 18
2 35	6 03	6 50	1 11	Brooklyn, Minn.	1 02	11 25	10 00	1 59
3 20	6 30	6 20	1 30	Brooklyn, Minn.	12 42	10 50	9 35	1 35
				Brooklyn, Minn.				
3 30	6 35	6 30	1 32	Wahpeton, N. D.	12 37	10 35	9 30	1 30
3 35	6 39	6 35	1 34	Moorhead, Minn.	12 29	10 30	9 25	1 25
5 10	6 50	6 05	2 35	Fargo, N. D.	11 07	8 55	7 50	11 52
5 15	6 55	8 10	2 40	Fargo, N. D.	11 02	8 45	7 45	11 45
				Fargo, N. D.				
341b							342b	
7 40	7 00		2 50	Vance, N. D. (n.o.)	10 57		5 10	11 40
8 35	7 37		3 23	Erie, N. D. (n.o.)	10 15		3 52	10 55
9 10	7 52		3 36	Camelton, N. D.	10 01		2 46	10 41
199b				Bedford, N. D. (n.o.)			200b	
8 00				Hannaford, N. D.			6 45	
8 50	8 05		3 47	New Rockford, N. D.	9 48		5 55	10 29
				Surrey, N. D.			200b	
9 05	8 05		3 47	Williston, N. D.	9 45		5 25	10 29
10 10	9 01		4 30	Williston, N. D.	9 01		3 57	9 41
1 30	10 32		5 37	Williston, N. D.	7 40		4 45	8 25
6 35	1 10		7 49	Williston, N. D.	4 40		9 15	5 35
5 50	1 25		8 05	Williston, N. D.	4 25		9 00	5 20
221b		1a					4a	222b
3 20	1 40	2 15	8 10	Berthold, N. D.	4 10	5 20	11 59	5 10
4 26	2 27	2 58	8 49	Stanley, N. D.	3 26	4 43	10 59	4 26
5 29	3 30	3 48	9 36	Williston, N. D.	2 29	3 48	9 48	3 30
7 55	5 20	4 40	11 17	Williston, N. D.	12 30	1 45	7 15	1 35
				Hawes, Mont.	Lv. 2 45	3 50		3 45
				Spokane, Wash.	Lv. 8 20	9 10		9 15
				Seattle, Wash.	Lv. 8 00	8 30		9 00

EAST DIVISION—Trs. 2, 3, 9...30'
Trs. 10, 27...60'
Trs. 13, 14...15'

WEST DIVISION—Trs. 2, 27...60'
Trs. 3, 4...30'
Trs. 200...15'

Tr. 21b lv. St. Paul 5 00; Minneapolis 5 40; arr. Willmar 8 30
Tr. 22b lv. Willmar 7 15; arr. Minneapolis 10 15. & arrive 12 45.

★ BEMIDJI & SAUK CENTER R. P. O.											
G. N. Ry. Route 110,741 pt. 156.20 miles.								Dist. 8			
	106b	6-1-1924						105b			
	6 05	Lv	†Bemidji, Minn.						Ar	7 25	
	6 30		Cass Lake, Minn.							6 55	
	6 40									6 50	
	7 22		Walker, Minn.							5 50	
	9 37		Wadena, Minn.							3 26	
15'	11 50	Ar	Sauk Center, Minn.						Lv	1 25	
Train 106						Train 105					
St. P. & Minot	11 15	Sauk Center				Int. Fla. & L. Falls				14 15	Bemidji
do	12 15	Sauk Center									
17											

The NP's St. Paul and Miles City RPO was somewhat lighter but, like the GN runs, carried long strings of storage cars to and from the Pacific Northwest. Because of the great economic dominance of the Northeast over the rest of the country in the railroad era, the volume of east-to-west mail was greater than the return flow. Hence there was a build-up of empty mail bags on the west coast, to be dead-headed back to the east. The NP had the contract to carry the dead-heads from the Pacific Northwest, which added to the revenue of eastbound mail trains, though not to the volume of mail.

ROUTES AND POST OFFICES

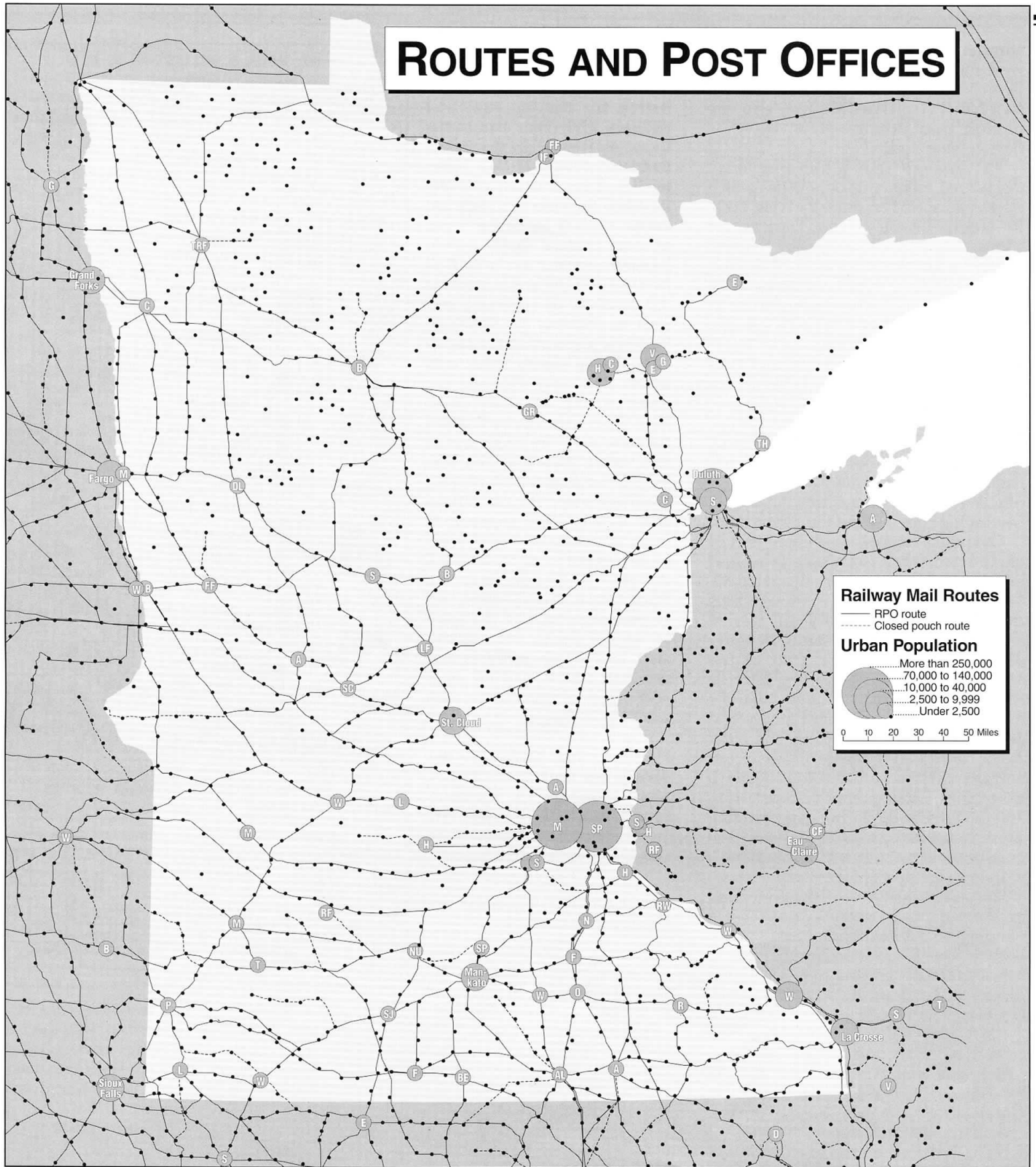


Figure 6. Railway mail routes (from the early 1920's) and post offices (from 1917) in Minnesota and neighboring areas. Rail mileage still exceeded miles of surfaced roads and provided virtually all transportation between cities; by act of Congress every rail line was automatically designated a mail route; nearly every organized township on a railroad had a station with an incorporated village; and virtually every village on a railroad was ordained a post office. The result: the familiar "string of beads" along each rail line. Meanwhile, between the rail lines lay large farm areas and many hamlets, without post offices, served by long rural delivery routes. Only in the forest fringe areas were there large numbers of post offices off the rail lines. Those places were mostly logging camps, pioneer farm communities on cut-over land, or isolated Indian settlements. In Canada the story was similar for the farming country south of Winnipeg. But in the wilderness north of the Rainy River and Border Lakes, on the glacier-scoured Canadian Shield, there were almost no post offices off the few, widely-spaced rail lines.

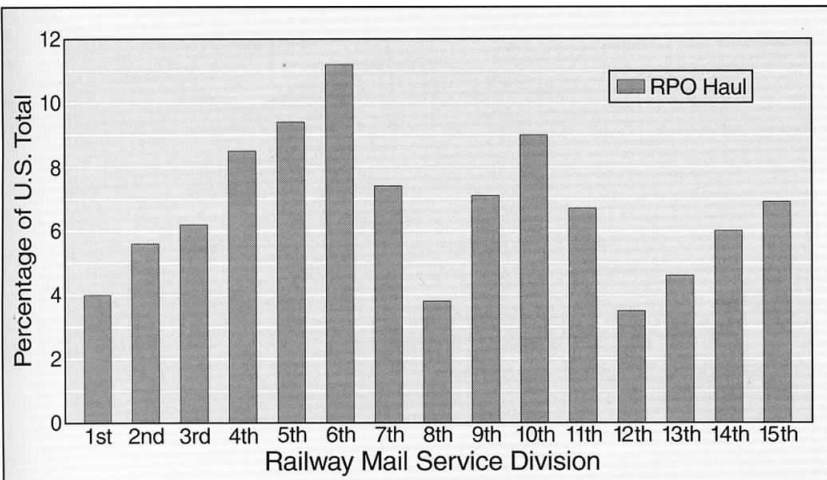


Figure 5. The RPO "haul" is the product of the amount of RPO space leased on mail trains times the number of miles the trains ran. Although it led in RPO runs, the Tenth Division was only third highest in haul.

The Soo Line's *St. Paul and Portal* RPO carried 30-foot cars to the international boundary at Portal, ND, with a continuing Canadian RPO to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and the CP mainline to Vancouver. The Portal run also usually carried several storage cars with through mail for western Canada. A connecting 30-foot run carried mail for Glenwood and Winnipeg on the Boundary Line. That line supplemented the *St. Vincent and Barnesville* RPO on the GN's Winnipeg run and the NP's Winnipeg train on the *Pembina and Manitoba Junction* RPO.

The CM&SP's *St. Paul and Marmarth* was the late-comer to the transcontinental corridor. 30-foot RPOs ran on the Seattle-bound Olympian and Columbian to that tiny town at the Little Missouri river crossing in the North Dakota badlands.

The Mid-Continent Corridor and Regional Main Lines

Three trunk lines with 60-foot RPOs running south from the Twin Cities made up the Mid-Continent corridor. Heaviest mail run of the three was the C&NW (actually the "Omaha") *Minneapolis and Sioux City* RPO, connecting for many southern Minnesota routes at Mankato, for southeastern South Dakota lines at Worthington, and northeastern Nebraska runs at Sioux City.

The major mail run of the entire Chicago Great Western system was the *Minneapolis and Omaha* RPO, southward through Randolph, Hayfield, Austin and Mason City. It was the main Minnesota connection to the mighty Union Pacific-Southern Pacific route to San Francisco, and regularly carried

Figure 7. The Twin Cities were eighth among the great mail terminals, ranked by the total capacity of their RPO runs. Only RPOs with an endpoint at the terminal were counted. Hence places with large RPOs running through but not terminating—notably Philadelphia, Baltimore, Buffalo, Hartford, and Milwaukee—don't appear on the graph.

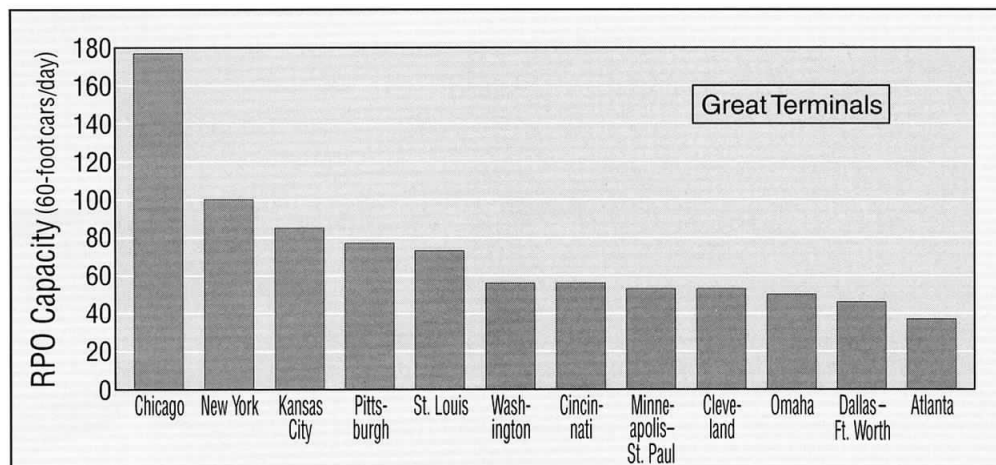
pouches from the Twin Cities for steamships to China, the East Indies, and Australia. The connecting *Chicago and Hayfield* RPO ran in the Great Western's through trains between Chicago and the Twin Cities. The Rock Island's *Minneapolis and Des Moines* RPO, through Northfield, Owatonna and Albert Lea, was part of the mail link between the Twin Cities, Kansas City, the southwest, and Mexico. The connecting *Albert Lea and Burlington* carried northwest mail to and from the cities of Iowa's Cedar Valley. The line was part of a continuing link to St. Louis; but the connection was weak because of heavy northwest-St. Louis mail routing through Chicago.

Four groups of regional main lines also radiated from the Twin Cities (Figure 8). The Duluth corridor was busiest. Before pooling of services in the mid-1920s, it had six RPO trains each way, plus two closed-pouch runs and a local RPO between St. Paul and Taylors Falls. Heaviest mail runs were on the NP, with six 30-foot RPOs daily. Two day trains on the GN and one on the Soo carried 15-foot RPOs; and the overnight trains on the GN and Soo were CP routes. The GN's original Duluth-Twin Cities line via Milaca and Elk River still carried a local RPO run, the *Sandstone and St. Paul*.

Three lines with half a dozen 15-foot RPOs ran from the *Twin Cities to Ashland* (C&NW), *Upper Michigan* (Soo), and *Milwaukee and Chicago* (Soo). The line to Sault Ste. Marie was the busiest, including a 30-foot RPO from the Twin Cities as far as Gladstone, MI. This run, along with the *Ashland and Minneapolis*, was the link between the Twin Cities and the eastern part of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve banking region. It connected for the Gogebic iron range, the Upper Michigan copper and iron ranges, and linked with the Canadian *Pacific Sudbury and Soo* RPO at Sault Ste. Marie for Montreal.

The Minneapolis and St. Louis carried 30-foot RPOs to Watertown, SD, with continuing 15-foot runs to Aberdeen and the Missouri river. The "Louie" also carried 30-foot runs from St. Paul and Minneapolis to Albert Lea and Des Moines, and 30-foot runs connecting at Albert Lea for Mason City, Marshalltown, and Albia in southern Iowa. One of the trains on the *Albert Lea and Albia* RPO was the North Star, carrying through sleeper, diner, and chair cars, as well as mail, between the Twin Cities and St. Louis in 22 hours.

Other regional runs, headed southeast, were the *St. Paul and Cedar Rapids* RPO on the Milwaukee Road and the *Minneapolis and Rock Island* RPO on the Burlington main line down the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi. The *St. Paul and Cedar Rapids* connected with routes to Dubuque, Decorah, and Chicago. Trains on that run followed alternate routes out of St. Paul to Farmington—one through Mendota and the other by way of Hastings and the Vermillion river valley. Although the Burlington line carried the GN and NP as well as its own name trains to Chicago, the RPOs were only a 30-foot and a 15-foot run to Rock Island, continued as locals to St. Louis.



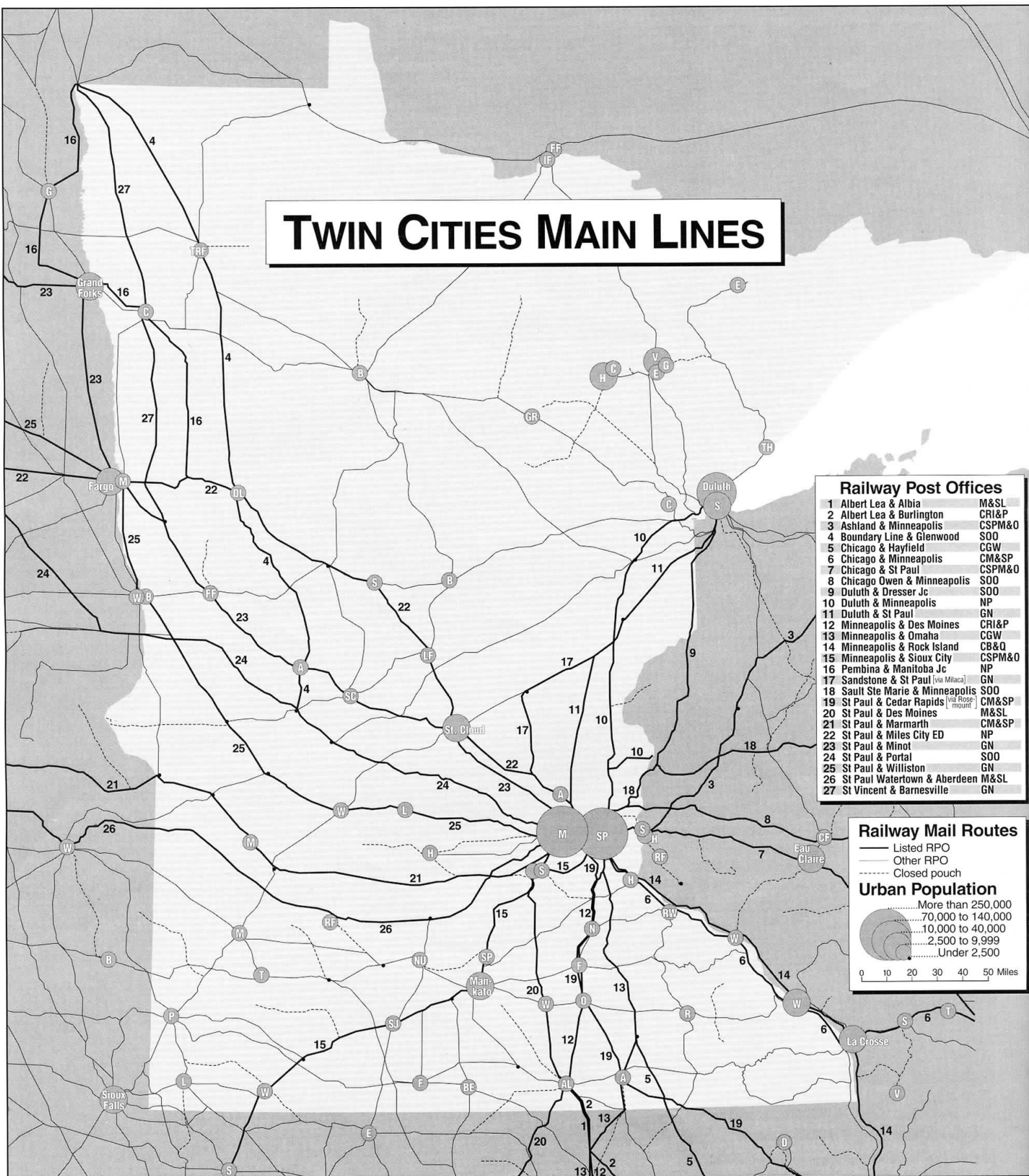


Figure 8. The main lines focusing on the Twin Cities. Bold lines indicate the RPO runs listed beside the map. Numbers on the map correspond to those in the list. Light lines show all other railway mail routes. The whole array of lines comprises the Minnesota-based network—all routes that had at least one endpoint in Minnesota or crossed some part of the state. I have included routes with endpoints at the bi-state urban areas at Grand Forks-East Grand Forks, Fargo-Moorhead, and Wahpeton-Breckenridge.

Figure 9. Bold lines show the network which supplemented the Twin Cities main lines in the north country. It was made up of branches of Twin Cities main lines and lines focused on Duluth.

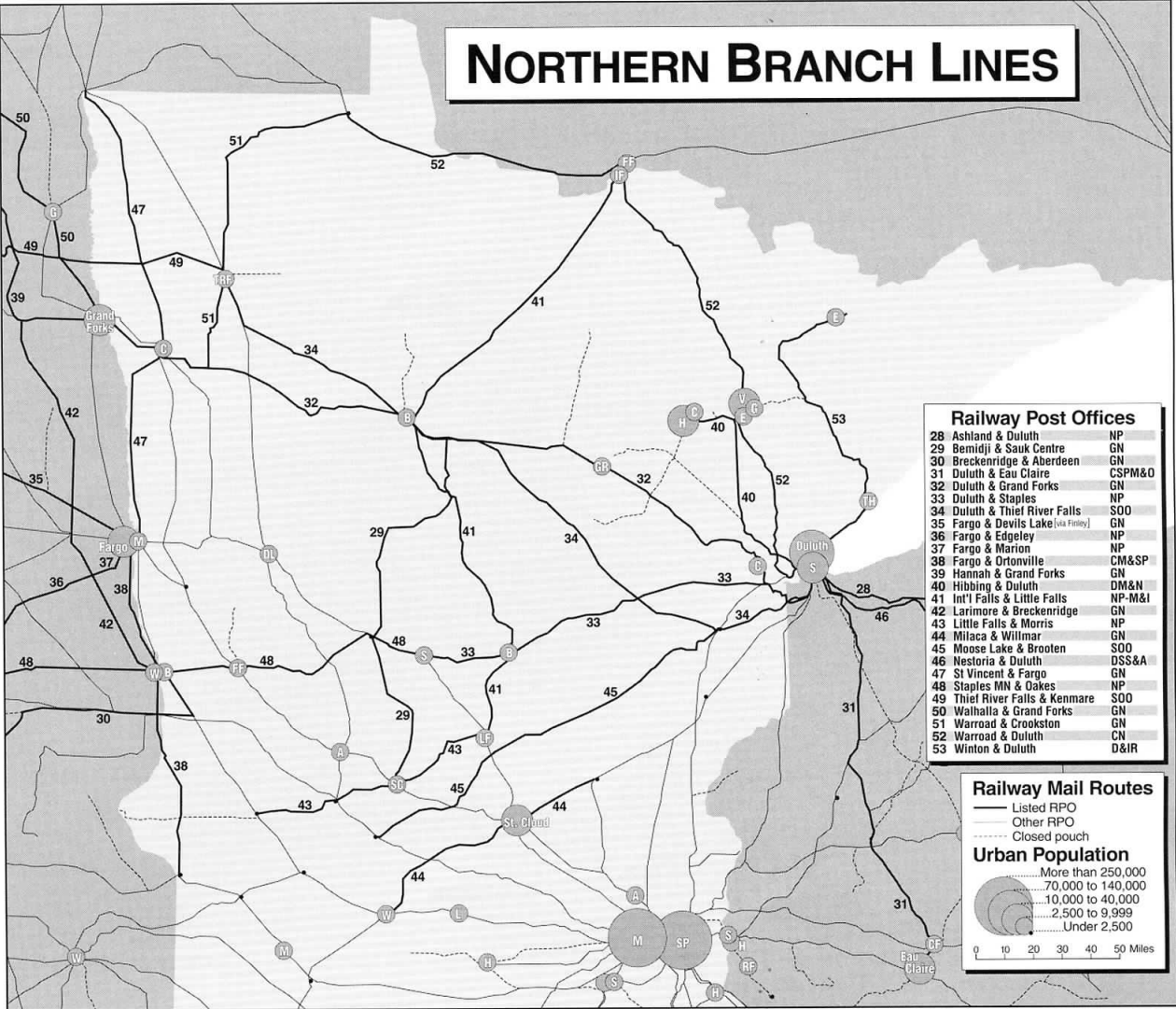
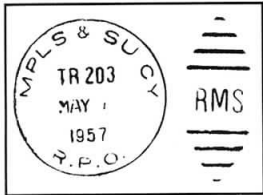
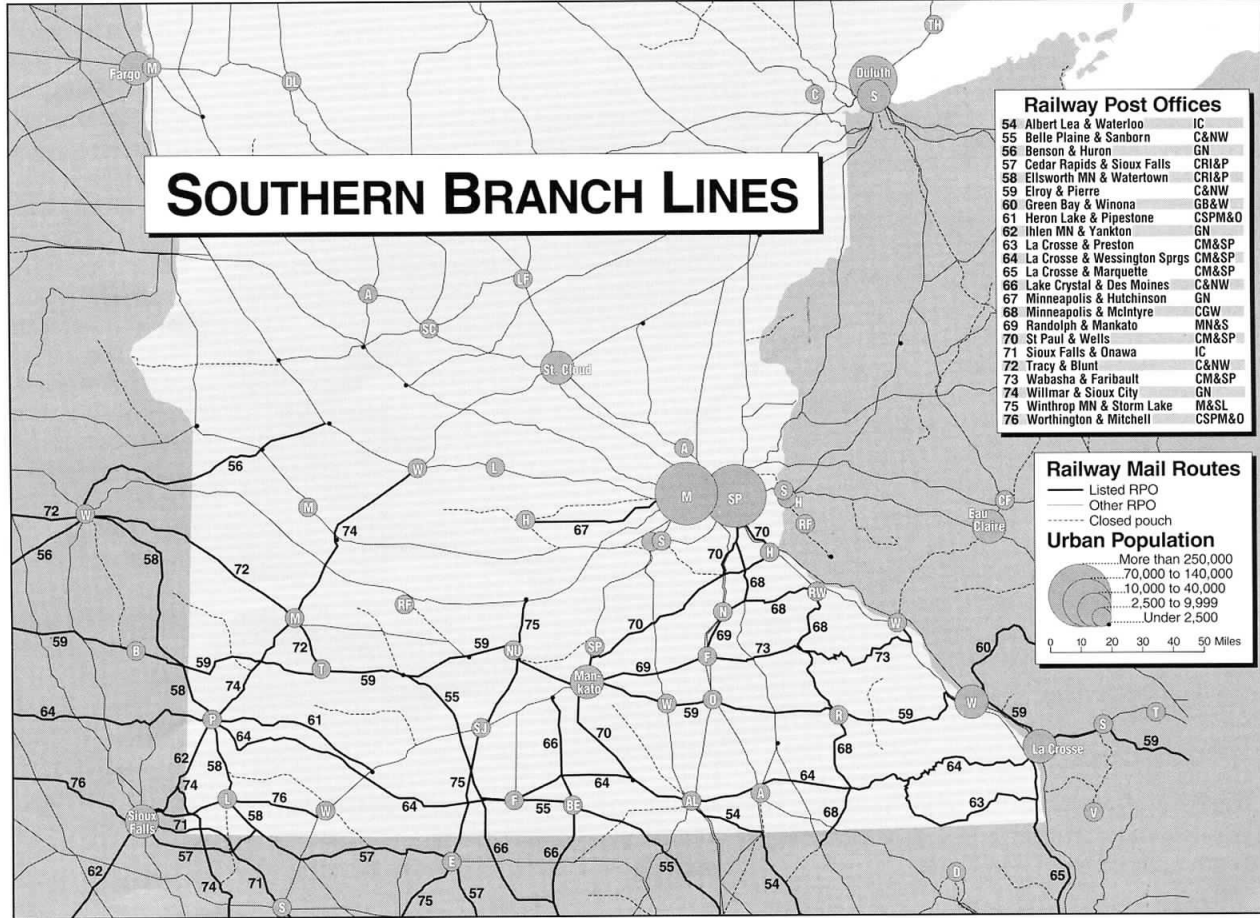


Figure 10. The network which supplemented the Twin Cities main lines in southern Minnesota was made up of not only local lines radiating from the Twin Cities, but also the thickly braided branch lines of several Chicago-centered trunk routes.





15-foot RPO, immediately behind the locomotive, on the CGW Minneapolis and McIntire, northbound to Rochester on a summer morning. Olmstead County Historical Society collection.

Northern local and branch lines

Most of the northern Minnesota lines radiated from Duluth (Figure 9). Two RPOs ran to the Iron Ranges and one north through the logging country to the Rainy River and Warroad (for Winnipeg); three west to the Red River Valley to join the transcontinentals and their Winnipeg connections; one southwest to the edge of the prairie at Willmar; one through the cut-over pinelands to Eau Claire connecting for southern Wisconsin and Chicago; and two east to Ashland and the Wisconsin-Michigan iron and copper ranges.

Between Fort Frances, Ontario and Warroad, MN, the U.S. *Warroad and Duluth* RPO and Canadian *Fort Frances and Winnipeg* RPO ran in the same trains. The segment was unique because it was manned by Canadian clerks working in the U.S. and American clerks working in Canada. ⁽⁵⁾ Trains that hauled the mail on the *Warroad and Duluth* in the 1920s also carried through Pullman sleepers between Chicago and Vancouver, through Duluth and Winnipeg (via C&NW and CN)—a unique transcontinental run that crossed Minnesota but bypassed the Twin Cities.

A large family of 15-foot RPOs laced together the cities and hamlets within the fertile Red River Valley and reached out from Fargo, Grand Forks, and Breckenridge. The 15-foot local *Breckenridge and Larimore* (GN) had once been much more important. In the days before completion of the Fargo-Minot cut-off in the 1910s, one of the two GN mail trains to Seattle saved a couple of hours by using that line to by-pass Fargo and Grand Forks.

Elsewhere in the North, two branches from Twin Cities main lines pushed into the Minnesota North Woods from Sauk Center to Bemidji and Little Falls to International Falls.

Southern branch and local lines

Minnesota's highest density of branch and local mail runs criss-crossed the state's earliest-settled area in the unglaciated southeastern hill country and its richest farm land on the south-central and southwestern glaciated prairie plains (Figure 10). 15-foot local RPOs radiated from the Twin Cities to Hutchinson (GN); to Mankato and Wells (CM&SP); to Randolph and Mankato (MN&S, RPO from Randolph);

and to McIntire, IA, through Red Wing, Rochester, and the historic iron mining district at Ostrander (CGW). Important branches from Twin Cities main lines of the GN provided links to southwestern Minnesota, eastern South Dakota, and northern Iowa.

A family of lines connected directly to Chicago by-passed the Twin Cities. They ran generally east-west across southern Minnesota, between Chicago-Milwaukee and the James Valley-Black Hills. As a result, in the 1920s they still gave a noticeable Chicago flavor to business and social connections in the southern part of the state, somewhat different from the other regions. Besides its Chicago service, the C&NW's *Elroy and Pierre* RPO provided important mail—and through Pullman—connections at Mankato between Omaha-Sioux City and southeastern Minnesota and between the Twin Cities and Black Hills. Meanwhile, CM&SP, C&NW, Rock Island, and Illinois Central branch lines provided direct connections from Chicago to Albert Lea, Fairmont and southwestern Minnesota towns.

The companies' shares of mail and revenue

The U.S. Post Office Department spent 63.3 million dollars on railway mail contracts in 1918—the year for which I have found National Archives records of payments to individual companies.⁽⁶⁾ That was about 15 percent of the entire departmental outlay. Surprisingly, it was only 1.3 percent of total railroad company revenue that year, just a little more than 5 percent of the total revenue from passenger trains.

The picture changed drastically through the late 1920s and 30s. Passenger revenue fell slowly at first with growing auto competition, then plunged during the Depression. Meanwhile, Postal Service expenditures rose dramatically during the boom of the 20s (total payments to railroads had risen from \$63 million in 1918 to more than \$100 million in 1926) and even rose slightly during the Depression. The net result was that railway mail contracts grew to account for at least half of total passenger train revenue during the Depression years. Our modern impression of the importance of mail contracts to maintenance of passenger service probably fits the Depression rather than earlier years. Nevertheless, mail contracts were always big business for the railroad companies that carried the major runs.

Each company's share of the revenue depended on its haul—how many mail trains it operated, how many miles they ran, and how many feet of space they carried.

Miles and trains—the Big Five

In the Twin Cities territory the GN ran the most RPO miles (Figure 11). Runs originating or terminating in Minnesota on the Great Northern totaled more than 3,500 miles. In addition to the GN, the C&NW, Soo, Milwaukee, and NP were the region's "Big Five" mail carriers. (C&NW runs included the CSPM&O; the Soo included the DSS&A; and the Minnesota and International was part of the NP.) The mid-continent regional companies—the M&StL, Rock Island, and Great Western—comprised a middling group. And the CN and Burlington headed a family of distinctly smaller carriers, down to the MN&S, with 15-foot RPOs in two of its motor cars to Mankato.

The rank order was the same if the measure was number of RPO trains, rather than miles of run (Figure 12). To be sure, the total number of mail trains exceeded the RPO trains. Many short branch-line runs on the C&NW,

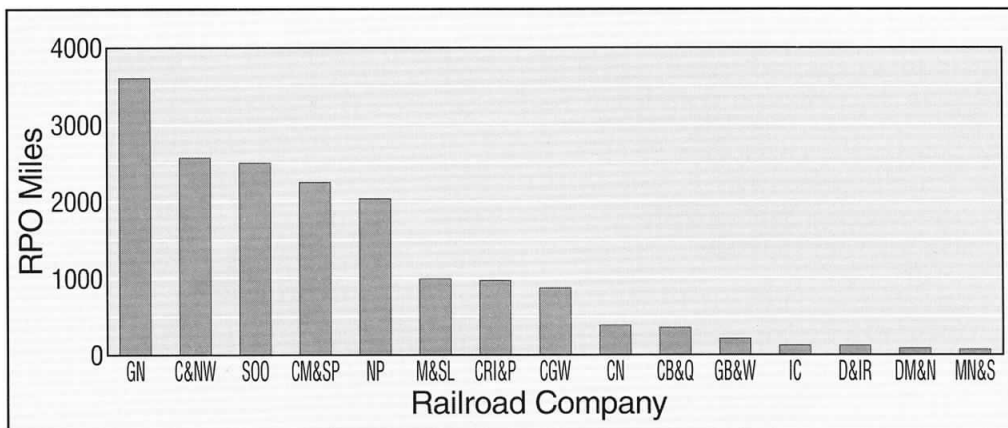


Figure 11. RPO miles on each company's lines in the Minnesota-based network. Nearly all of the companies also operated lines outside this region; in fact, most had the greater part of their mileage outside the 10th division.

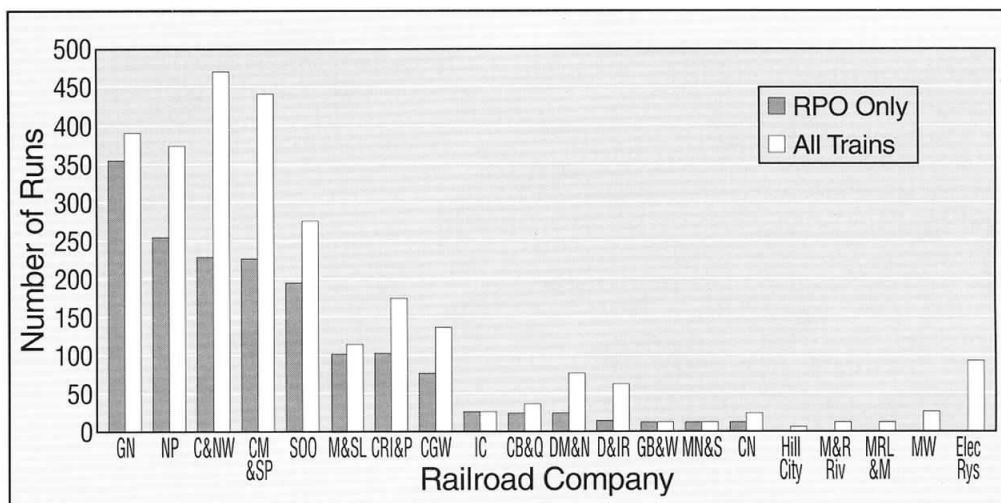


Figure 12. The weekly number of mail trains ranged from a high of 470 on the Chicago and Northwestern to 6 on the Hill City. The "All" bar on the graph includes both RPO and closed pouch. Electric railway runs were all closed pouch, on street cars in the Twin Cities area and Duluth-Superior.

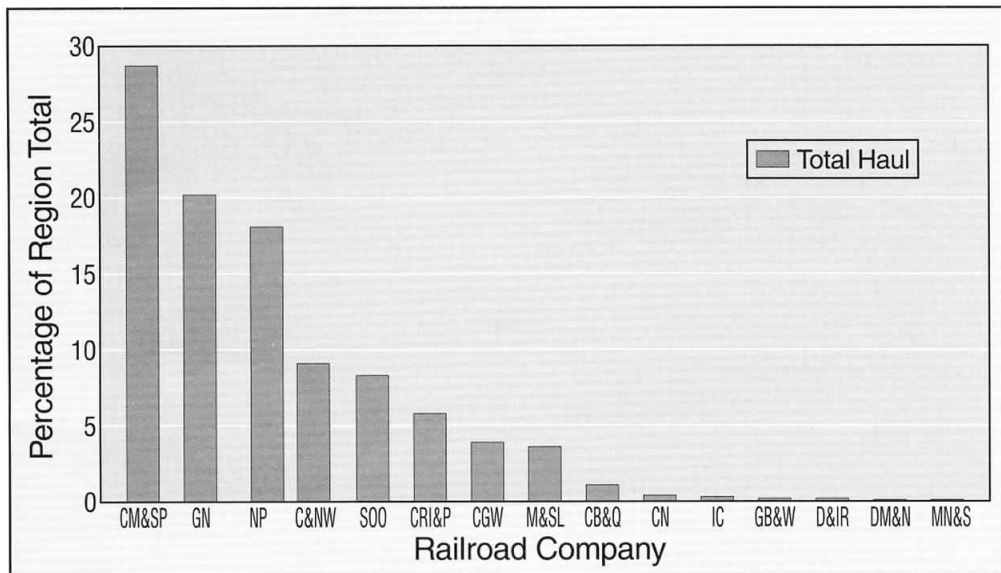


Figure 13. The Milwaukee led other companies in total mail haul (RPO, closed pouch, and storage), thanks to the high volume on the "Chic and Min".

Milwaukee, and to a lesser extent on the Rock Island and Great Western, were closed pouch. Closed pouch runs even included the name trains on the "Chic and Minn"—the Olympian, Pioneer, and Columbian. The D&IR and DM&N had higher proportions of CP runs than the others because of their intricate network of short, local passenger routes that served the Iron Range communities, all linked to the two RPOs to Duluth.

Three memorable short lines, with exclusively closed-pouch runs, and far out on the tail of the ranking, were relics from the lumber era—the Minneapolis & Red River (Craigville to Deer River), the Minneapolis Red Lake & Manitoba (Bemidji to Red Lake), and the Hill City. The Luce Line (MW) run from Minneapolis to the prairie farm country at Lake Lillian was only a CP, although it was later up-graded to an RPO when the road reached its ultimate western terminal at Gluek.

The great bulk of CP runs on electric lines were on the Twin Cities Rapid Transit system—between Minneapolis and St. Paul; from Minneapolis to St. Louis Park, Excelsior, and Robbinsdale; and from St. Paul to Hastings (via the St. Paul Southern) and Stillwater. The remaining two were in the Twin Ports, from Duluth to Superior and from downtown to New Duluth.

Haul and revenue

But if we change the measure from number of trains to total haul, there was one big change in the ranking of companies (Figure 13). Because of the very heavy hauls on the *Chicago and Minneapolis* RPO, the Milwaukee Road replaced the GN as clear leader of the "Big Five". The other four had distinctly lower average hauls per train not only because they had no counterpart to the Milwaukee's "Chic and Min" but also because they ran a comparatively large number of branch-line trains with only 15-foot RPOs. The mid-continent group still stood firmly in the middle of the order.

From what we know about the hauls, we can estimate that this fleet of mail trains earned about 4.9 million dollars from the U.S. postal service in 1918. (7) Revenue per company would have ranged from \$1.4 million for the Milwaukee Road down to a paltry \$430 for the Hill City Railway Company, for its tri-weekly runs each way between Swan River and Hill City.

The "Big Five" earned about \$4.1 million from their mail runs through Minnesota—about 6.5 percent of the Railway Postal Service total payments to all railroads in the nation; the mid-continent group, about \$590,000, or another nine-tenths of a percent of the national total. I estimate that the *Chicago*

and *Minneapolis* RPO alone earned nearly \$1.1 million in that year. The 1911 U.S. Government Register indicated that about 1.3 percent of all the regular clerks in the U.S. Railway Mail Service worked on the "Chic and Min". They handled 1.7 percent of the nation's total mail haul—a remarkable record.

The nation's nerve system

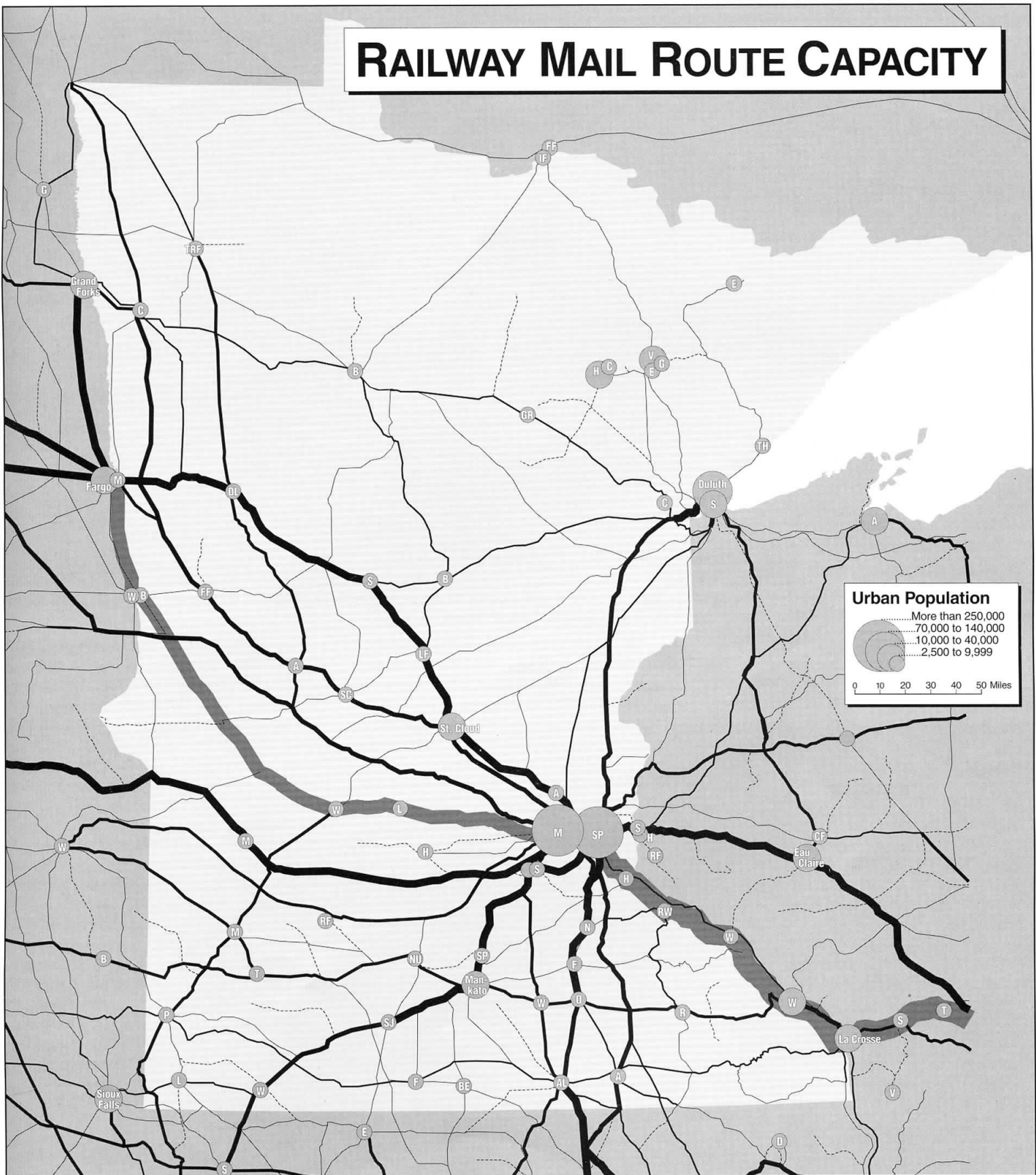
If the flow of goods on the railroad system was America's life blood in the early 1920s, the railway mail runs were the nation's nerve system. The messages they carried stimulated and guided the nation's production of goods and services, the movement of people, and the growth of knowledge. Trains carried more than 17 billion pieces of mail plus nearly a billion parcels in 1926. More than 10 billion of those pieces were first-class, and another 2 billion were postcards and franked mail. The first class mail they carried contained the overwhelming majority of all inter-city messages by all modes.

Figure 14. Here was the nerve system of the regional economy and society. The spine of the system was the southeast-northwest transcontinental corridor through the Twin Cities. Branches reached out to every point of human settlement.

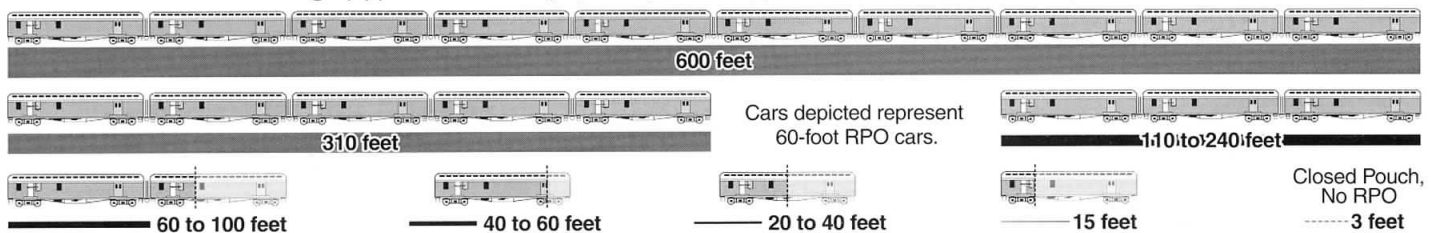


15-foot RPO southbound on the NP's International Falls and Little Falls run at Pequot (now Pequot Lakes) in 1917. Vehicles parked in the foreground suggest how the mail moved on the connecting star route to Crosslake, Emily, and Outing. Minnesota Historical Society collection.

RAILWAY MAIL ROUTE CAPACITY



RPO and Scheduled Storage (approximate footage per day, one-way)





A modest amount of closed pouch mail moved on the Twin Cities and Duluth streetcar systems. In 1946 the motorman of the Hopkins shuttle transfers the mail bag to the Como-Harriet car at 44th and France. Lowell Wood photo.

Think of the range of subjects, if you could have looked over the shoulders of the men in the RPO cars and x-rayed the envelopes flying through their hands. A clerk on the *St. Paul and Williston* might be handling a letter detailing the Chicago financing of a real estate development in Spokane. A mail order from a farm family in the James River valley is in the pouch on the NP's *Fargo and Edgeley*. The lone clerk on that run is turning it over to the crew on the eastbound *St. Paul and Miles City* Number 4; the next morning the order will reach the landmark Sears or Ward catalog center in the Twin Cities. A clerk on the *St. Paul and Marmath* sorts a warm, hopeful letter from a pioneer farmer's wife on the raw plains of eastern Montana to her cousin back in Waseca. Another, on the *Minneapolis and Sioux City* works a letter from St. Olaf College Professor O. E. Rolvaag to his publisher in Oslo, discussing the manuscript for *Giants in the Earth*. A clerk on "Chic and Min" Number 57 makes up a pouch for St. Cloud that contains a letter from Sinclair Lewis to his brother Claude, planning their 1924 canoe adventures to the wilds of northern Saskatchewan. The message came from London through the hands of clerks on the *New York and Chicago* RPO on the New York Central. These were a few among millions of messages that added up to the story of how this part of the world worked.

The map of railway mail capacity dramatically illustrates the pattern (Figure 14). The Twin Cities were the nerve center for the Upper Midwestern United States. The Twin Cities main lines—especially the transcontinentals to the southeast and northwest—were the spine. Duluth, Fargo, Mankato, and Albert Lea were major junctions. I estimate that in 1925 the Minnesota-centered system carried about 900 million messages—about eight percent of the nation's total first-class mail moving between cities.

By today's standards the system would have seemed small, and certainly slow. Human hands, deft as they were, could not match today's electronic equipment. While the U.S. total of person-to-person inter-city messages grew from something like 13 billion in 1926 to several hundred billion in 1990, the electro-magnetic, then electronic, share grew even more dramatically. The telephone and telegraph part of the inter-city flow was less than 10 percent in 1925; by 1990, though telegraph had all but disappeared, toll calls nearly equalled first class mail and surely dominated personal communication. Meanwhile, the combined numbers of 1st-class mail and phone messages per capita multiplied nearly ten times. If comparable numbers for e-mail, fax, and web messages could be added today, the per-capita growth would be at least twenty-fold, perhaps far more.

Or compare the average speeds for the fastest RPO trains with today's virtually instantaneous electronic transmission. On the *Chicago and Minneapolis*, average speed of the fastest mail train in the 1920s was 41 miles per hour, 40 on the *St. Paul and Williston*, 39 on the *Chicago and St. Paul*. On the other transcontinentals and the Duluth runs the fastest trains averaged 30 to 36 mph. Fastest trains on the mid-continent and Sault Ste. Marie runs averaged between 25 and 31. Most local branch-line trains averaged between 20 and 25; local closed pouch runs generally less than 20. The Hill City, averaged 13 mph!

But the RMS worked. It played its role as the nerve system for America's first coast-to-coast, national economy and society. It was the solid foundation for the later fantastic growth of the information system. Meanwhile, the question remains: Is the average American ten or twenty times better informed today than in the RPO era?

What's going on here at Parkers Prairie on a summer day about 1905? His exchange of pouches completed, the clerk in the 15-foot RPO apartment has time to contemplate the crowd of men boarding the southbound Soo Line local on the Boundary Line and Glenwood run.

Minnesota Historical Society collection.

FOOTNOTES

1. All data on Railway Post Office routes, schedules, contracting railroad companies, and capacity in this study have been compiled from the Schedule of Mail Trains for each Division of the Railway Mail Service, dated as follows: First Division, October 26, 1925; Second Division, October 22, 1925; Third Division, May 20, 1924; Fourth Division, July 26, 1926; Fifth Division, May 27, 1926; Sixth Division, February 1, 1923; Seventh Division, October 20, 1924; Eighth Division, October 6, 1922; Ninth Division, December 24, 1920; Tenth Division, September 23, 1925; Eleventh Division, April 23, 1923; Twelfth Division, 1924, date unknown; Thirteenth Division, June 15, 1927; Fourteenth Division, October 30, 1923; and Fifteenth Division, October 5, 1922. The schedules were borrowed from the collection of the RMS Library, 12 East Rosemont Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22301. Available schedules were selected for completeness and proximity to a 1920 publication date. Additional schedules were used to obtain data on storage and closed pouch space for the First and Tenth Divisions. Those were dated March 15, 1926, and June 20, 1927, respectively.

Data on mileage of RPO runs and segments were compiled from the Schedules, supplemented where necessary by mileage data taken from schedules published in The Official Guide of the Railways and Steam Navigation Lines of the United States, Porto Rico, Canada, Mexico, and Cuba (annual), New York: National Railway Publication Company, editions of 1920 and 1929. Average speeds were calculated from these mileages combined with time tables in the published schedules.

Data on passenger train equipment and named trains associated with particular RPOs were also compiled from The Official Guide.

All national data on post offices, total volume of first class mail, and comparisons with telephone and telegraph are taken from the following sources:

Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Washington: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975. Postal Service data, Series R163-171, pp 804-805; Series R172-187, p 806; Toll Phone data, Series R1-12, p 783; Telegraph data, Series 56-70, pp 788-789.

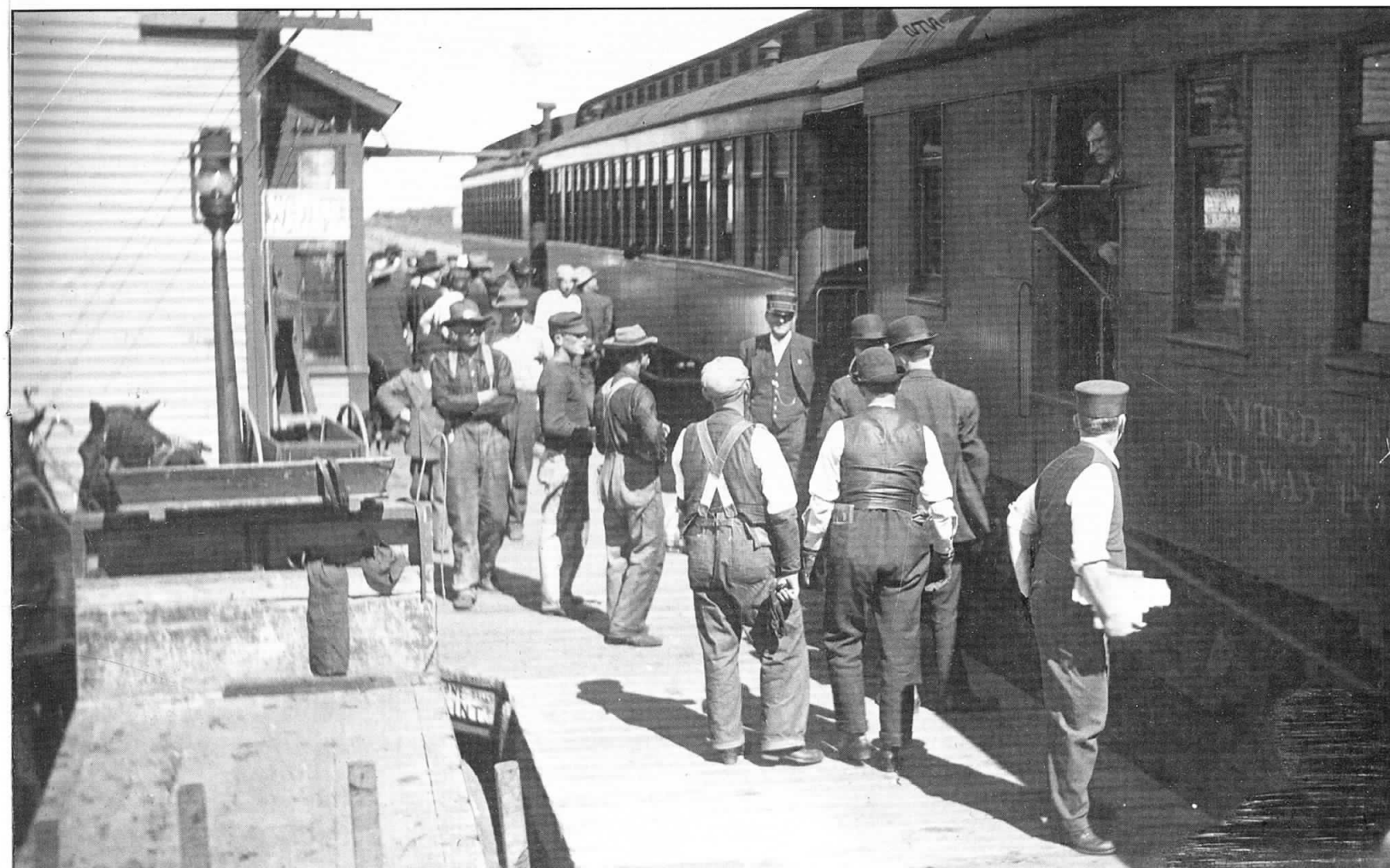
Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1994, Washington: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994. Postal Service

data, Table 909 p 578; Phone data, Table 888, p 570; Telegraph data, Table 886 p 569; Population data for all years, Table 1, p 8.

Post Office Department Budget Digest 1949, Washington: U.S. Post Office Department, 1949, pp 49, 50, 70, 241, 248.

Number of clerks in the Railway Mail Service in 1925 was compiled from Consolidated Statement of the Cost of Operation of Railway Post Office, for the Months of October and November 1925, U.S. National Archives.

2. Material in this and the preceding paragraph is based on Bryant Alden Long and William J. Dennis, Mail by Rail. New York: Boardman-Simmons, 1951, pp 140-155.
3. I compiled data on county of appointment and RPO assignment for individual clerks and count of all regular Railway Postal Clerks from The Official Register of the United States, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1911, Vol 2, pp 571ff. That was the last year the RPO clerks list was included.
4. Long and Dennis, Mail by Rail, p 228.
5. Long and Dennis, Mail by Rail, p 302.
6. Records of the Office of the Postmaster General, records of the Division of Railway Mail Service,



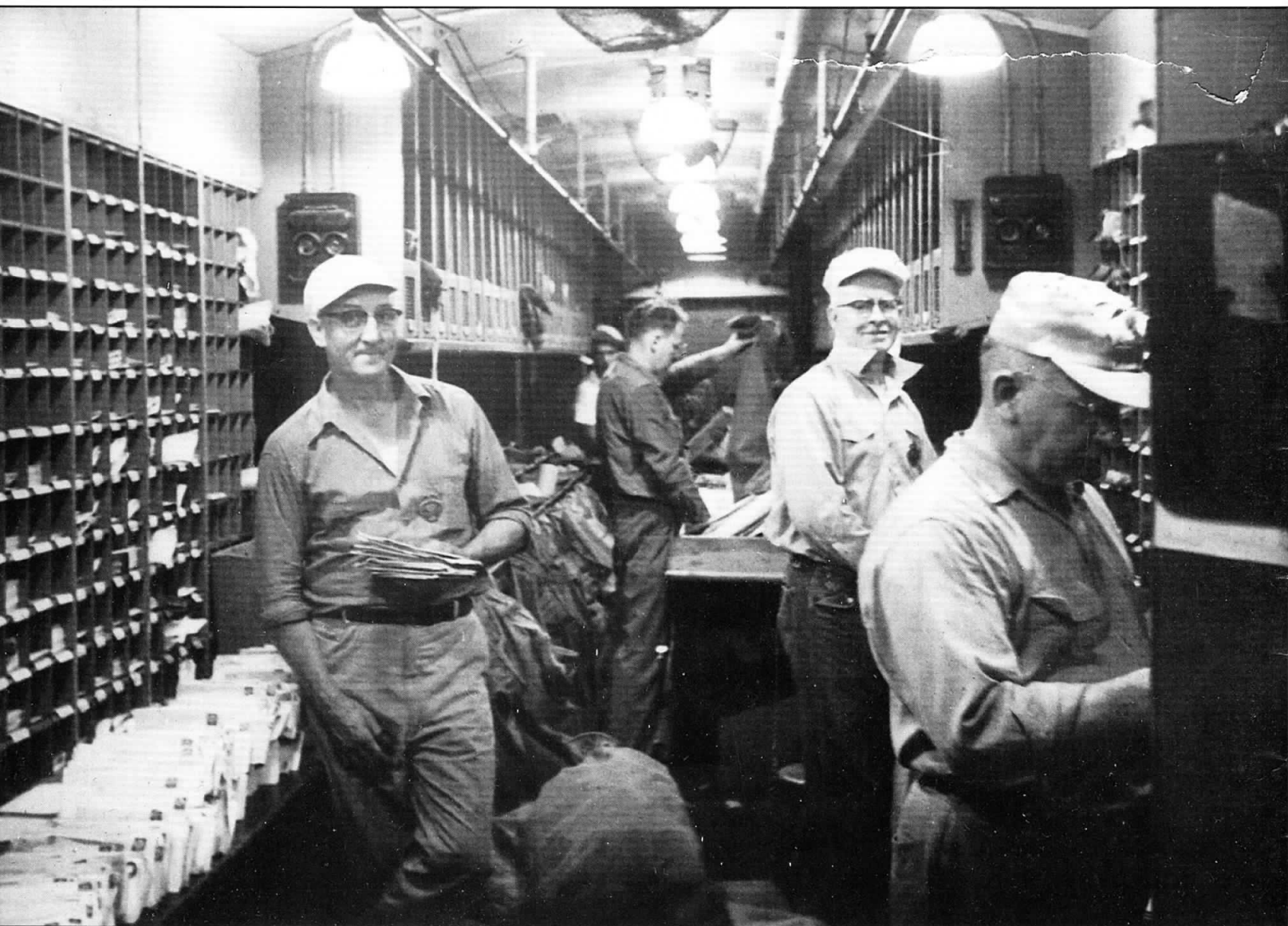
Entry 135, Numerical File 106: "List of RR companies - old pay/new pay". The railroad companies listed in this compilation were legal entities which in many cases were operating subsidiaries or lessees of larger systems. To match railroad companies in this National Archives list with the company names used in the RMS schedules, I referred to Moody's Manual of Investments, Steam railroads. New York: Moody and Co., Volumes for 1920 and 1924.

7. Revenue estimates for individual runs and regional parts of a company's total system were derived by calculating individual run or region's share of the company's total railway mail foot-miles, or "haul", and multiplying that share by the total railway mail payment to the company.

Acknowledgements:

I am indebted to the Cartographic Laboratory, Department of Geography, University of Minnesota, and especially to Alan Willis, for rendition of the maps and graphs. Dr. Frank R. Scheer and his RMS Library at Alexandria, VA, provided the schedules, from which the basic data for this study were extracted, and other valuable reference materials. Aloah South, Dr. Richard Smith, and Jennifer Nelson provided maps and records from the U.S. National Archives. Aaron Isaacs obtained the photographs from the files of the Minnesota Historical Society and provided encouragement and counsel. Lester Leonardson critically read the manuscript and gave me access to his personal collection of RMS memorabilia and records from his years as a railway postal clerk on runs to the west from the Twin Cities. University of Minnesota students in Geographic Information Systems, with the guidance of Geography Professor Robert McMaster, digitized the railway mail routes for computerized mapping; and their work was put in final form with the help of graduate students Mary Charpentier and Phillippe Thibault. Jane Borchert patiently and critically read the manuscript and spent hours with me at Frank and Arja Scheer's kitchen table helping to screen and select the schedules for this study.

Sorting the mail in a 60-foot car on the Chicago and Minneapolis RPO, probably Train 55. The year is 1952, but the basics had not changed since the 1920's. Lester Leonardson collection.



Inside rear cover: The Fall 1994 Minnegazette showed the Great Lakes steamship South American clearing the Duluth lift bridge. Here's another passenger steamer in the same location in 1941. The 600 passenger S.S. Noronic, built in 1913 was owned by Canada Steamship Lines. It burned in Toronto in 1949 killing 118. Star-Tribune collection.

Rear cover: The wire mesh fender was not an asset in heavy snow. During this 1949 storm, some were removed by the motormen. St. Paul Pioneer Press photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.







MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

PO Box 16509
Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509
www.TrolleyRide.org

August 2021

Pursuant to board action at the August 5, 2021 meeting of the board of directors and in honor of the 50th anniversary of operation of the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line the attached materials are being republished by the Minnesota Streetcar Museum under the under the Creative Commons "Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International" and "Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported" licenses. You may choose either license as suited for your needs. In particular, the 3.0 license is meant to be compatible with the Wikipedia project.

In general, these licenses will allow you to freely:

- **Share** — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
- **Adapt** — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

Under the following terms:

- **Attribution** — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
 - **Please credit the *Minnesota Streetcar Museum* and provide our URL www.trolleyride.org** We would also appreciate hearing about your re-use of our materials though that is not a requirement of the license.
- **ShareAlike** — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.
- **No additional restrictions** — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation.

No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material.

Please review these licenses at the Creative Commons site for full legal code and details on allowed uses:

- Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International:
 - <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>
- Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported
 - <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode>

If these licenses are not appropriate for your needs, for example you want to use the material commercially without crediting us or do not want to share your contributions under the same license please reach out to us for other options.

We Make Minnesota's Electric Railway History Come Alive!